

# TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: PEDAGOGICAL STANDPOINT WHILE WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

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## AUTHORS' DATA

Zabella Zohrabyan, PhD in Education, Associate Professor

Chair of Special Pedagogy and Psychology

Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University, Armenia

Contacts: [zohrabyanzabella41@aspu.am](mailto:zohrabyanzabella41@aspu.am)

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of education is the change anticipated in a person (or group of people) which is implemented by the use of specially planned educational actions, under the influence of activity. This justification becomes more sensitive when children with special educational needs, especially those with mental retardation find themselves in the new educational environment - in an inclusive school.

This literature review paper aims to describe the issues of education in children with mental retardation in schools providing inclusive education.

The study was conducted using literature on theoretical analytical methods.

The results of the study showed the educational work for mentally retarded children in inclusive schools can be implemented if an optimal educational environment is created, training for educators is held and a strong educational system is created.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, mental retardation, the process of education, educational processes, and socialization processes.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of inclusive education appeared to prevent segregated educational practices for children with special educational needs (Manzano-García & Fernández, 2016; Barton, 2008; Echeita & Verdugo, 2005; Arnaiz, 2003). In Europe, the concept of inclusive education develops according to international education laws. That concept focuses its exertions on the educational

non-exclusion of people who are underprivileged both culturally and economically (Manzano-García & Fernández, 2016; Bristol City Council, 2003).

Another opinion is expressed by Sanagi (2011) who notes that a "process that allows expansion of the scope of inclusion to include diversity in individual education needs" (p.103) is a shared aspect of the various definitions of inclusive education. In other words, the target for inclusion is primarily diversity, rather than children in the concept (cited by Sanagi, 2016). Under the concept of inclusive education, separated learning opportunities at special schools and so forth have been affirmed as social resources internationally, such as by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1994). In regards to all these definitions, there are still misunderstandings about inclusive education and its meaning and role in society.

While talking about inclusive education, its implementation, and role, as well while reflecting the promotion of inclusive education, Ainscow (1999) indicated that the definition of inclusive education was understood in a confused manner, or not understood at all. After more than two decades, this view is still present and misunderstanding is visible in many countries and within the separate structures functioning in the file of education in many countries, as well as in Armenia.

## **REVIEW AND ANALYSES**

As to diversity, the functioning Armenian special support education system targets only children with disabilities or those with special educational needs. Therefore, it is expected to understand what the role of the inclusive school is for a child with a disability. Is it expected to meet the educational and academic needs of the child, or only socialization and inclusion, and participation are enough? These are all the hot points to reflect when issues in inclusive education are justified and discussed.

Socialization plays a key role in a person's education. As noted by Rozhkov and Bayborodov (2001) from a pedagogical standpoint the uniqueness of the study of socialization is in that, that it studies the influence of regularity and methodology of the pedagogical influence that affects the child's development, to increase the efficiency of social interactions. Currently, education is not viewed in isolation by teachers and psychologists; it is viewed from the positions of activity and a person's systemic, structural dialectic determinism. The process of education has

always been the main focus of researchers throughout the historic development of pedagogic consciousness. That is the reason why in the present time education remains the main category in pedagogy. This phenomenon improves along with the development of practical experience, the science of pedagogy, and its progressive teachings. The passing of social experience from older generations to younger was formed earlier; therefore, the essence of education is interpreted from various standpoints (Mikerova, 2013).

Surroundings and interactions of the social system have a great influence on the educational process and the process of human development.

According to Vigotsky's theory (1987; 1978), the decisive factors of psycho development are located not within the child's organism and the individual but rather outside of it, within the child's socialization interaction situation with other people. Vigotsky formulates the idea of activeness of the processes of learning and education in which both the student and the environment are active. He notes that the basis of education should be comprised of student's individual activity, and the skill of the educator should be the direction and regulation of the latter activity since the social environment is the lever of the entire educational process and the educator's role is in control of the above-mentioned lever.

Based on the theory suggested by Vigotsky (1978) each deviation of the child's development (blindness, deafness, mental retardation, and so on) not only changes its attitude towards the world but primarily affects people's relationships, thus resulting in a decline of child's social position. The decline of a child's social position, deterioration of a person's complete development reduces child's physical and psychological insufficiency to be the resolution of social problems, as well as the formation of the complete development of the person, meaning education.

Vygotsky's theory was further developed by Lebedinsky (1985), which noted that corrective measures should be taken when children are experiencing learning and educational difficulties, otherwise, socio-pedagogic inconsistencies may arise, as well as emotional, personal, and other kinds. According to Lebedinsky secondary disturbances affect a child's learning and education processes. The study of the possibility of recovery among children with developmental disturbances allows researchers to talk about creating an environment that would support the resolution of the problem. There is no doubt that the teacher's personality, ability, and personal orientation play a key role in the formation of the educational environment. Vlasova, Mastjukova, Pevzner, and others contributed greatly in writing about corrective measures, compensation, and

implementation of education measures among mentally retarded children. These writers pinpoint the necessity of a personal approach in dealing with mentally retarded children (Lebedinskiy, 1985).

Danilova, Podvalnaya, and Kameleva (2019) note that special pedagogic conditions should be organized for such children. In their research, they conclude that the schooling system and education in public schools are not optimal enough to efficiently resolve issues of mentally retarded children. It is necessary to create proper, universal, and adequate conditions during the stage of preliminary education because during this stage they have multiple problems in their surroundings.

The authors' opinion is highly shared and agreed, taking into consideration the fact that to organize sufficient education for children with developmental problems early diagnosis and medical-psychological evaluation are required and needed.

Bratus and Zeygarnik (1980) in their papers pay special attention to the preparation and training of teachers working with mentally retarded children. Authors think that teacher and the psychologist should be aware of the conditions which can directly affect children's psychological development. At the same time Gordeeva, Sychev, Sidneva, and Pshenichniuk (2018) also note and highlight the importance of psychological and pedagogical readiness in teachers and educators. Within this scope authors particularly hold the approach that the important component of pedagogical culture is the teacher's ability to understand a child's developmental path and structure. While discovering the common problems of modern education it is very important to state that while organizing school activities, it is crucial to use psychological skills, namely when solving problems connected with educational issues in children with special educational needs. This allows organizing the learning and education processes in public schools in such a way that will consent to the optimal development of each individual child in the school environment.

The overall analysis of the above-mentioned literature allows concluding that in their works they subsequently come to the idea that children with developmental issues need an individual approach while being at school. The teacher that works with such children must have the necessary level of psychological and pedagogic readiness. The content of the educational process, on one hand, must be aimed towards the resolution of children's problems and on the other forms of humanistic approach toward micro surroundings and school environment as a whole.

Korolenko's and Donsky's (1990) research illustrates how various forms of destructive behaviors eventually resulting in inclination to self-destruction are formed, works illustrate the essence of education work from the viewpoint of humanization. And here also the role of teacher seems to be crucial in regard of perception different learners' abilities and behavior.

Kumarina (2007) cultivated a children's education program which reflected a new humanistic direction in the education process. Given that children with developmental issues have problems in communication and the majority of them develop inadequacy, low self-esteem, there is a need to develop their will and emotions. Education systems and education work technologies that discover the purposes and issues of education are cultivated to aid the education of children with mental retardation in schools providing inclusive education.

## **CONCLUSION**

Aside from theoretical interpretations, practical experiments that are implemented in dealing with children with mental retardation are also illuminated. In practice, there are two methods that deal with the education of children with mental retardation. The first is to create appropriate conditions in establishments implementing inclusive education. The second step is to integrate one into the educational collective, ordinary life.

In order to be able to succeed in this, first of all, there is a need in three basic factors, their full arrangement, and availability:

1. Registry and recovery of features of developmental impediments among children with mental retardation.
2. Readiness and preparation of appropriate staff.
3. Disclosure of teacher's human qualities, high proficiency.

Nowadays, taking into consideration the fact of educational reforms in Armenia, the structural and decentralized organization of all these factors is very important.

The main directions of practical work remain to be principal and get the following formulations: processes of socialization and education, providing psychological aid to children's and their families, sequence of education process, primary socio-psychological and professional labor adaptability of graduates.

Thus, the educational work for mentally retarded children in inclusive schools can be implemented if an optimal educational environment is created, training for teachers are held and a strong educational system is created.

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