Russia: evolving from traditional perspective towards the newest approaches in disability field

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Introduction

General information about the country

Russia (from the Greek: $P\omega\sigma(\alpha - Rus')$, also officially known as the Russian Federation, is a transcontinental country in Eurasia with a population of 146,544,710 people and with an area of 17,125,191 km² (as defined in the *Russian Constitution*). Basic general education is compulsory according to the *Russian Constitution*. Parents or people who officially take on the role of parents (guardians) are required by law to provide their children with basic general education. The system of education in Russia is divided into three main stages: pre-school education, general education, and professional education. General education, and extended education (supplementary). Professional education has several levels: initial professional (basic vocational) education, secondary professional (secondary vocational) education, and higher education as well as postgraduate education and additional professional education.

According to the Russian *Ministry of Education and Science* there are 60,500 general education institutions (primary schools, secondary schools, boarding schools, gymnasiums, lyceums, etc.) that are currently educating more than 19 million students. Moreover, there are around 2,000 special education institutions with 300,000 students who have special needs (in view of their health conditions, disabilities, learning difficulties, etc.).

The system of higher education comprises 607 state institutions and 358 non-state (private) institutions with 4.7 million people attending them.

Educational policy orientation in Russia

The Russian Education System is currently undergoing radical changes. A number of recent federal normative documents (white papers) have given the latest impulse to the ongoing transformation. These documents define goals and implement instructions to advance the national educational policy. Among others there is a number of key documents: the Presidential Act No599 Of measures aimed at the national policy implementation in education and science that was signed on the 7th of May 2012¹; the Federal law No273 On education in the Russian Federation that was enacted on the 1st of September 2013²; the Federal special-purpose programme Development of Education for 2013-2020³; and the Federal special-purpose programme Academic and teaching staff for innovative Russia for 2014-2020⁴.

The main strategic goal behind the educational reformation is to improve the ability of Russia to compete in the global economy. According to the Conception of long-term development of Russia⁵ the following aims are the national priorities until 2020:

- Raising the quality of scholarly and scientific work (fundamental science, groundbreaking research, and innovations). In order to develop Russian scholarship and science,

¹ https://rg.ru/2012/05/09/nauka-dok.html

² http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/

³ http://bolplotds.ucoz.net/FEDERAL/gos_programma_razvitija_obrazovanija.pdf

⁴ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_146678/fb2b527f135af1ab7ccb62d4f165e7ca637efa06/

⁵ http://government.ru/info/6217/

a number of key orientations for international collaborations have been defined: improving academic mobility (researchers and other professionals' mobility), inviting renowned scholars from abroad, and supporting young scholars (Popov, 2012).

- Raising the quality of education. In order to develop Russian education, several orientations for international collaborations have been defined: scholar and researcher exchange, teachers and students exchange, and advancing institutional mobility and developing mobility programs. One of the indicators that this aim is fulfilled is going to be that Russian educational institutions significantly improve their positions in the world league tables and other ranking systems.

– Developing educational export. In accordance with the Conception of long-term socio-economic development of Russia, by 2020 revenue from international students studying in Russian institutions has to increase and constitute no less than 10% of the overall sum that is invested by the state into the education system (Kurtanova, 2014).

Russia is aiming to build international collaborations in the fields of science and education through international organizations, associations, and collectives: *European Union, Counsel of Leaders from the Commonwealth of Independent States, Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, EurAsEC (EuroAsian Economic Community), BRICS, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation). In addition to that Russia has other partnerships and dual agreements with some <i>EU* countries (Germany, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) that contribute to Russia's development in its priority areas. These priority areas are specified in the Agreement about Partnerships and *Collaborations* and some of those priority areas have student and teacher exchange as their performance targets (Tarskiy, 2012).

Different international programs (such as *The Fulbright Program, Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet*, etc.) provide excellent opportunities for building networks. Russia sees the internationalization of its leading institutes of higher education (including research universities and federal universities) as one of its key strategies to integrate into the global educational and scholarly community.

National reports on disability

The rights to life and education of people with disabilities in the Russian Federation are regulated in accordance with the international documents which include, apart from the aforementioned documents, the following: the *Convention on the Rights of the Child;* the *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children; The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;* etc.

The following legislative pieces in relation to people with disabilities and their rights are viewed as greatly important: the *Federal special-purpose program Children of Russia* with a separate segment *Children with disabilities* (1992-2010)⁶, the *Federal Law on Education*" Act (1992)⁷, *Federal Law on the Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation* (1995)⁸, *Federal Law on the Education of Individuals with Disabilities* (Special education Act) (1999)⁹, The Ministry of Education and Science Act on Special Nature of Special Education Institutions Types I–VIII (1997)¹⁰, The Ministry of Education and Science order Psycho-medico-pedagogic Commission Regulation (2009)¹¹, the Governmental Decree Nº 965 of Declaring an

⁶ http://www.consultant.ru/cons/CGI/online.cgi?req=doc&base=LAW&n=67340&dst=100010#0

⁷ https://rg.ru/1992/07/31/obrazovanie-dok.html

⁸ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_8559/

⁹ http://pandia.ru/text/78/418/51335.php

¹⁰ http://pandia.ru/text/78/291/3673.php

¹¹ https://rg.ru/2009/07/09/ped-komissia-dok.html

individual as disabled (1996)¹², and The Ministry of Health order N_{2} 117 Of the correct procedure for the medical assessment of children with disabilities under the age of 16 (1991)¹³. The very existence of these documents and their contents reflect the country's aspiration to develop a new perspective on people (both children and adults) with disabilities and the attitude towards them and their circumstances in accordance with the fact that they are the most vulnerable population category and a special socio-demographic group with special needs and interests that should be treated as a priority (Azbukina & Mikhailova, 2007).

The text of the *Federal special-purpose program Children of Russia* for 2007-2010 refers to children with disabilities as "a highly vulnerable category of children" and provides relevant information confirming this. There are 29 million children currently living in Russia, of which 587 thousands have disabilities and therefore require urgent help with rehabilitation, adaptation and integration into the larger society¹⁴.

After surveying the works of such scholars as A.D. Goneev, N.I. Lifinceva and N.V.Jalpaeva (2002), E.L. Goncharova and O.I. Kukushkina (2002), we conclude that Russia has an effective special education system. The institutes of special education provide special facilities to enable medical specialists and educators to work effectively with children with disabilities. The procedure of enrolling children with disabilities in mainstream educational organizations and special education institutes gets regulated in accordance with the *Federal Law* on the Education of Individuals with Disabilities (Special education Act) (1999)¹⁵, the *Federal Law* on the Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation (1995)¹⁶, and The Ministry of Education and Science order Psycho-medico-pedagogic Commission Regulation (2009)¹⁷. According to the Special education Act, the enrollment of children in special education institutes is subject to the consent of their parents (or lawful guardians) and to the psycho-medico-pedagogic commission (PMPC). PMPC is an institute that was established to identify children with disabilities and/or with behavior deviations, to conduct their full examinations and to prepare appropriate recommendations for facilitating psycho-medico-pedagogic assistance and for organizing their education and development.

One of the alternatives to the aforementioned arrangement is the system of inclusive education that brings both children with and without disabilities to study together in comprehensive general education schools (Averina, 2011). Russian policy-makers are currently working on designing an effective system of inclusive education (Yegorov, 2012). The main principles of inclusive education are captured in a number of governmental documents (*National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation until 2025*¹⁸ and the *Conception of Russian Education Modernization until 2010*¹⁹). At present inclusive education on the whole Russian territory is regulated by the *Russian Constitution*, by the *Federal Law on Education*, by the *Federal Law on the Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation*²⁰ and by the main principles of the *Letter from the Ministry of Education and Science* dated 7.06.2013²¹.

In 1992 Russia launched the project *The integration of people with disabilities*. One of the outcomes of the project was that 11 regions of Russia organized special-purpose research groups focused on integrated education of children with disabilities. In order to prepare future teachers for the work with children with special needs, the *Ministry of Education* decided to introduce relevant educational courses ("Foundations of special pedagogy" and "Psychology for Special Needs") into the curriculum of pedagogical institutes since the 1st of September 1996. Along

¹² http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_11334/

¹³ https://www.lawmix.ru/prof/80502

¹⁴ http://www.consultant.ru/cons/CGI/online.cgi?req=doc&base=LAW&n=67340&dst=100010#0

¹⁵ http://pandia.ru/text/78/418/51335.php

¹⁶ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_8559/

¹⁷ https://rg.ru/2009/07/09/ped-komissia-dok.html

¹⁸ https://rg.ru/2000/10/11/doktrina-dok.html

¹⁹ http://pandia.ru/text/79/387/4651.php

²⁰ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_8559/

²¹ http://akty_minobrnauki_rossii/pismo-minobrnauki-rf-ot- 7062013-no-ir-53507

with that the institutes of extended professional education were recommended to adjust these educational courses into relevant teacher development courses.

In 2015, the *Ministry of Education and Science* passed the following documents: the *Federal State Educational Standard for the Primary General Education of Students with Disabilities*²² and the *Federal State Educational Standard for the Education of Mentally Challenged Students* (Students with Mental Deficiencies)²³. These standards are enacted nationwide on the 1st of September 2016.

Historical and contemporary approaches to studying disability

There are usually five distinct developmental stages identified in the history of Russian special education. Along with the development of special education the whole Russian society has gone a long way from hatred to tolerance and understanding, partnership and integration of people who are different in their development.

The first stage is characterized by the transition from aggressive and intolerant attitudes to considerate behavior towards people with disabilities in the church and in public organizations. At this stage society comes to the realization that people with disabilities can be educated and deserve to have educational opportunities. Through this a gradual shift to the second stage happens. The second stage is characterized by the opening of the first socially orientated organizations for the deaf (1806) and for the blind (1807). The opening of these first special institutes is considered to be an important step towards building a system of special education and it happened mostly because Russian monarchy aimed to copy the west, their practices and policies. At the time Russia still was not socially and culturally prepared to understand the necessity of educating children with visual and hearing disabilities (i.e., the model of their education was borrowed and introduced into Russia though the rationale behind it was not fully understood). From this attempt to educate children with disabilities, society gradually comes to understand and acknowledge these children's educational rights. This period (1806-1930) is considered to be the time when the system of special education was created through opening chains of special education organizations of three main types (for blind children, for deaf children and for children with intellectual disability) (Lebedeva, 2012). After the Revolution (1917), the system of special education was joined with the whole education system. Different chains of special education institutes were founded under the total control of the state as the state decided to keep special education separate from the rest of the education system. As the result of this decision, the main way to educate children with disabilities was done through closed all-year boarding schools where these children were kept away from their families and peers, completely isolated from the larger society. The fourth stage lasted until 1991; it is characterized by the development of special education along with its differentiation from the rest of the education system. Moreover, at this stage there was total state control which was forcing special education institutes to be completely closed from mass media and the whole outside world (and these institutes were developing independently from parents' and societal wishes). This policy was dictated by the communist party's ideology which insisted upon eliminating any sign of illbeing. Furthermore, when the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks (the CC AUCPB) issued the regulation of compulsory education of everyone, the minimum qualifying requirements were introduced that everyone had to achieve. This meant that children with disabilities could not be exempt from these requirements and they had to be educated in a way so that the expected results could be delivered. This led to the significant development of special education. From the end of 1970's mainstream schools start opening special classes for children with developmental problems. In addition, experimental classes start being introduced for children whose intellectual development was severely impaired due to

²² http://www.10spb.edusite.ru/DswMedia/fgosnoosovz22112014.pdf

²³ http://xn--80abucjiibhv9a.xn--

p1ai/%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%8B/5133

having serious developmental disorders. By 1990 the total number of special schools was of 2,789 (with around 575 thousand students) (Perevoznikova, 2012; Aksenova et al., 2001).

Many distinguished scholars were active in the field of special education during that period (before 1990). Such renowned scholars (educators, psychologists, and medical specialists) as Gracheva, Kashchenko, Troshin, Vygotsky, Sukhoreva, Pervzner, etc. were working at the time on the issues of pedagogical correction of developmental deficiencies and behavior deviations being involved in research in the field of abnormal childhood psychology.

E. K. Gorbacheva (1866-1934) was one of the first scholars who started working on opening special education establishments. She wrote the first handbook on how to work with children with intellectual disability.

V. P. Kashchenko (1870-1943) was a famous scholar who organized research projects in defectology (therapeutic pedagogy). He founded a special school-sanatorium that was later transformed into the *Defectology Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences* (1943) which was consequently transformed into the *Institute of Special Education of the Russian Education Academy*.

Psychiatrist G, J. Troshin (1874-1938) significantly contributed to the field by differentiating mental deficiencies from child neurosis and psychosis; in other words, differentiating mental deficiencies from problems and disorders that stemmed from somatic illnesses, disadvantaged circumstances or parental actions.

Psychologist L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) laid the foundation of special psychology, identified and differentiated specific features in disabilities, and defined the necessity and social significance of help to children with disabilities.

Psychoneurologist G. E. Sukhoreva (1892-1981) systemized the understanding of oligophrenia in regard to the time and cause of the damage to the nervous system. Through differential diagnostics she differentiated oligophrenia from developmental deficiencies, from speech pathologies, and from other conditions that characterize other disorders outside the oligophrenia spectrum.

Psychoneurologist M. S. Pervzner (1901-1991) developed the classification of oligophrenia taking into account different aspects of developmental problems in cognitive activities and the degree of mobility in inhibitory and excitative processes (Kostyunina, 2009).

The fourth stage comes with the enactment of the Law of compulsory and free education along with the consequent Act of compulsory education for children with developmental problems. After the World War II, people came to see differences between people in a new light. Human rights are now widely regarded as the most important values. In view of this, we see the United Nations (1945) passing The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention (1945-1949) bans "killings, torture, mutilation and corporal punishment". An international treaty to protect human rights in Europe, The European Convention on Human Rights, is drafted in 1950. But the system of special education in Russia is still closed from mass media and its development happens independently from parents and society in general. However, in 1970's Russia starts breaking the walls of inequality around people with disabilities.

The fifth stage is the stage of going from equal rights to equal opportunities. This stage (from 1990 to present) is a period of transitioning to an integrated system. *UNESCO* passes *Human Rights and disabilities* (1991) and the *United Nations* the *Declaration of the rights of people with disabilities and mental deficiencies*. According to N.N. Malofeev (2001, 2009, 2010) at this stage of development in the field of special education and public conscience in general in Russia, intellectual disability there is an evolution taking place (children with special needs are getting gradually included in mainstream schools).

Current general trends – formulating paradigms

The main trend in special education in Russia right now is developing more practices that are integrative and inclusive in their nature. On the governmental level, diverse and multi-faceted

programs are getting designed and implemented with socio-inclusive orientation aimed at promoting social unity and social solidarity: along with that, relevant legislative amendments are made. The development of this trend facilitates the opportunities for all people to fulfill their educational rights²⁴.

The Federal Law of education in the Russian Federation (2012) defines inclusive education as education where there is equal access for all children regardless of their individual capacities and special educational needs ²⁵. The non-discriminatory principle and the interdependence between integration and inclusion form the basis of this law. With this law it is important to consider that there are two main interpretations of integration. The first one implies bringing people with different disabilities (with visual and hearing problems, mental deficiencies, locomotor apparatus problems, etc.) into physical proximity with one another. Interaction between these groups constitutes inclusion. The second integrated education require a long-term strategy and cannot be viewed as a separate and disconnected issue. A real change can only be achieved through a systemic approach: "Inclusive form of education concerns everyone who is involved in educational processes: children with and without disabilities, their parents and relatives, teachers and other educational specialists, organizations of extended education, administration, and governmental bodies" (Inklyuzivnoe obrazovanie, 2014, p. 8).

Analyzing current trends in special education from a socio-cultural perspective, Zaytsev (2003) and Malofeyev (2009), identified and highlighted significant differences in socio-cultural conditions that precipitated in the set-up of an integrated system and its further development in Russia and other countries. At present integration and inclusion in the Russian educational context represent a promising field and its development can potentially follow two distinct paths (i.e., evolutional and evolutional). The revolutional orientation implies decisively breaking away from the Russian tradition of differentiated organization and adopting the western model. However, we view the revolutional orientation as a methodological mistake. Adopting some of the aspects of the earlier Western models, that were used in Europe in 1970's, would be to some extent reasonable. However, it has to be acknowledged that the difference between the socio-cultural conditions in Russia and Europe negates the possibility of positive outcomes arising from the revolutional approach. For this reason we see the evolutional orientation as a much more effective solution.

It is undeniable that inclusion and complex integration are the main trends in special education in Russia today (Akhmetzyanova, 2015). Indeed, the inclusive model has gained much support in recent years. The findings of Borodkina (2013) revealed that since 1990's more and more people in Russia have been coming to see inclusion as an appropriate form of education for the development and socialization of children with disabilities. The complex integrative model mainly focuses on uniting people with different types of disabilities which requires the development of resource centers (as part of special education institutions) that can act as platforms that facilitate psycho-pedagogical and social support for children with special needs (Selivanova & Myasnikova, 2015). These resource centers optimize the process of socialization of people with special needs due to their remedial and rehabilitating nature, as well as due to the fact they create a platform for different specialists (scholars and practitioners) through which they can interact and work collaboratively in designing, testing and developing innovative, complex and sector-specific programs, methods and tools. Moreover, the enormous potential of recreation camps should not be disregarded as they allow children with different needs to connect through spending their holidays together, acknowledging that the organization of integrated holidays for children with different needs represents a good opportunity to enhance their mutual acceptance and understanding.

²⁴ <u>http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/</u> - p. 3, s. 5

²⁵ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_140174/ - p. 1, s. 27

Disability studies - an academic discipline, field of study

Since the beginning of the 20th century and along the course of 70 years, our country developed theories and practices of educating children with disabilities through defectology (therapeutic pedagogy, pedology, remedial pedagogy), a special field of study focused on children with special needs. The *Experiental Defectologic Institute*, established in 1929 on the basis of Kashchenko's medico-pedagogical station, took the place of the leading institute in the field in the country. In 1943 this institute was given a new name, the *Defectology Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences*. It was later transformed and is now called the *Institute of Special Education of the Russian Education Academy*. Moreover, it is accepted that Vygotsky is a founding father of Russian defectology. At the beginning of the 20th century, he formulated the key principles of the development of children with special needs and he made a great contribution to the development of education for blind and deaf children. All in all, he laid the foundations of special education in Russia.

Defectology (from the Latin: defectus – flaw, defect and logos – scholarship) is a discipline that is focused on the patterns and characteristics of the development of children with special needs. It studies principles and methods of organizing education for these children. Defectology consists of different divisions and examines a variety of issues: problems with psychophysical development, mental deficiencies, emotional-volitional problems, locomotor apparatus problems, and some others.

The main goals of defectology are:

- The development of theoretical foundations for all-round support of children with special needs.
- The development of applied methods and practices of medical-social support.
- The organization of relevant research projects and subsequent reflection upon them.

Today the priority goals for special education in Russia are defined as follows: developing academic foundations for the early detention of specific symptoms and problems in children; providing timely complex all-round help at early stages of children's development; designing and developing the basis for inclusive learning and establishing new forms of integrating special education and mainstream schools; revising the educational standards for children with special needs in accordance with their real life needs; and developing new contents, methods and tools of special education programs (developing a principally new approach to individualization of educational processes) (Malofeyev, 2009).

Interdisciplinary empirical analysis of the phenomenon of disability

Research analysis of the positivist orientation

The theory of social recognition (Romanov, 2007; Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2005) devoted to social and psychological problems of relations between persons with disabilities and healthy people, was developed by the representatives of the Saratov school, whose progress in fundamental and applied research on disability issues and in constructing the ideas of positive disability is most notable in the national scientific and public discourse. The basis for the proposed typology of disability concepts is I.G. Yasaveyeva's (2006) idea of the existence of positivist (objectivist) and phenomenological (subjectivist) concepts of study of social problems (Stepanova, 2012). Considering these concepts through the lens of social problems of persons with Limited Health Abilities (LHA) as a special community, this idea presents the main approaches to the study of this population category and the concepts of disability based on these approaches. From the standpoint of the positivist approach, a person with LHA is a person with disability, a subject to objectively existing physical limitations; in terms of the phenomenological approach, persons with LHA are objects of influence.

Among current Russian studies on disability concerning the issues of social adaptation of persons with disabilities and completed within the socio-pathological approach, we should

mention the works of Y. A. Blinkov (2002), V. M. Vasilchikov (2002), A. A. Dyskin (1997), E.S. Svistunova (2011), and others. Most often these works analyse different aspects of rehabilitation of persons with LHA, issues of their medical and social expertise and assistance as factors of their social adaptation. The socio-pathological context can also be traced in the works of V.S. Tkachenko (2002). This author proposes to view disability and "the disabled" as objects of sociology of health and sociology of medicine as one of the branches of the latter.

Research analysis of the humanistic orientation

The issues of determining the structure of social integration as a process and system are considered in the works of researchers of the familistic approach in Russia (Darmodekhin, 2012; Lurye, 1972). A reflection on integration structure in the context of institutional traditions is represented in the works of contemporary scholars V. Yarskaya-Smirnova (2005) and K. Naberushkina (2005) who consider education as an institution of social integration and adaptation of an individual (Ageyeva, 2006).

The problem of raising the degree of access to education for representatives of various social groups is reflected in the works of Y. Avraamova (2014), D. Konstantinovsky (2014), D. Romanenkova (2013), Y. Roshchina (2005), and E. Yarskaya-Smirnova (2005). A number of works articulate the need for the development of continuing education practices as a factor that enhances educational chances of an individual (Ponukalin, 2011). Currently, in the framework of modernization of the *Russian Education System*, increasing humanization of social and cultural relations and growing attention to the personal development of an individual, many researchers have acknowledged the need for institutionalization of integrated education as an education that best fits the principles of a social state governed by the rule law (Valeeva & Demakova, 2015). Integrated education is considered as one of the most important institutions of inclusion of persons with different levels of mental and physical development into the society in Russia (Akatov,2003; Goncharova, 2002; Nazarova, 2005; Nikitina, 2002; Penin, 2006; Svodina, 1998; Stanevsky, 2000; Shmatko, 2008).

Despite the lack of fundamental research on the issues of institutionalization of integrated education in Russia, various aspects of this process are reflected in the works of T. Basilova (2011), T. Vlasova (2012), V. Gudonis (2004), N. Malofeyev (2009), V. Feoktistova (2003), and L. Shipitsyna (2006). The specifics of organizing the integrated education of persons with disabilities and the extent of its effectiveness are represented in the studies of many Russian researchers: Y. Kuzmicheva (1991), L. Noskova (1993), L. Tigranova (1978), G. Makhortova (2009) (integration of children with visual impairments), and E. Tanyukhina (1984) (integration of children with locomotive system disorders). The economic aspects of institutionalization of integrated education are represented in the publications of R. Dimenshtein (2000), P. Kantor (2013), and I. Larikova (2000). The problem of further training of teachers in general education institutions and the importance of defectological education of teachers and tutors who are involved in the system of social and educational integration of atypical children, are covered by I. Bgazhnokova (2004), O. Kukushkina (2011), and G.Kumarina (2003). In the theory of sociocultural atypicality by Y.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova (2005), disability as a phenomenon is viewed on the basis of the principles of tolerance and cooperation. The basis of Y.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova's theory of socio-cultural atypicality is a conscious shift in emphasis towards distinguishing social and cultural differences of persons with disabilities without highlighting their biological and medical (physical) differences from most other people (Terentvev, 2010).

Methodological pluralism

An analysis of sources indicates a high interest of Russian theoreticians and practitioners to the problem of education of people with disabilities and persons with LHA. The results of an analysis of specialized literature demonstrate how terms such as "integrated education", "educational integration" or "pedagogical integration", which were actively used until the mid-2000's, are being replaced from the pedagogical vocabulary by other terms such as: "inclusive education" or "educational inclusion." This is due to the fact that Russia is becoming actively engaged in the international movement for the rights of persons with disabilities, expanding the boundaries of scientific research in the field of special and general education; the priority place is taken by a humanistic and interdisciplinary approach to the development of training and education issues of persons with LHA.

Among the first publications entirely devoted to the problem in question, are materials based on the experience of the *School Centre of Diagnostics and Integrated Training of Children with Mental Development Problems* (Shipitsyna, 2006) and practice-oriented recommendations on organizing integrated education and training of children with hearing impairments of preschool (Shmatko, 2008) and school age (Shipitsyna, 2006; Nazarova, 2005). According to N. D. Shmatko (2008), integrated education is a natural stage of development of special education system. He notes that the integration process in Russia is very different from the Western European one and proposes to distinguish several models of integration: combined, partial, temporary, and complete.

An intensive development of integrated education and training practices and their scientific and methodological support have determined the necessity for an extensive discussion of the obtained results. In 2001, the *Ministry of Education* and the *Institute for Correctional Pedagogy of the Russian Academy of Education* (RAE), under the auspices of *UNESCO*, held an international scientific and practical conference on the problems of integrated education of persons with LHA. The results published analysed theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of the organization of integrated education in preschool institutions, general education schools, and vocational education institutions. The conference gave a meaningful interpretation of the integration process of children with developmental disorders, an active participation of the children themselves in this process; and the improvement of the society and the system of social relations, which is unavailable for children with disabilities due to a certain stringency to its potential subjects.

As the methodological basis for integration of children with LHA, the principle of equal rights and opportunities for education was proclaimed. This integration can adopt two forms: social and pedagogical (i.e., educational). According to L. M. Shipitsyna (2006) the integration of persons with LHA should be carried out starting from the pre-school age following the order from social to pedagogical one.

In 2002, with the participation of specialists from *RAE's Institute of Correctional Pedagogy*, a letter was written to the *Russian Ministry of Education* calling not only to contribute to the emergence and implementation into practice of the ideas of integrated education and training of children with development disorders together with their normally developing peers, but also to give it an organized character and to provide from an early age each child with developmental disorders with a form of integration available and useful for their development.

In the first decade of the 21st century, Russian philosophers and sociologists are becoming increasingly engaged in the study of problems of social and educational integration of persons with LHA. The phenomenon of a person with LHA is primarily social rather than medical, and its characteristics are identified in the conditions of social interaction, according to L.G. Vasilyeva (2014). To effectively solve the problem of their social integration, it is necessary move from a medical to an existential interpretation of it, and the process of integration of a person with the LHA into the society should involve not only their inclusion into the normal cultural space, but also the transformation of this space itself. Researchers believe that the essence of social integration of persons with LHA is primarily connected with their inclusion into the society and into ordinary interpersonal relationships stemming from extension of their rights and possibilities to participate in all types and forms of social life.

Sociological researches note that the lack of resources on social policy and social protection of persons with LHA in Russia, coupled with socio-cultural differentiation of this group of population, make it more difficult to develop and implement the optimal social policy (Potapova, 2012). V. N. Merinova (2005) claims that key strategies and forms of public policy addressing the social problems of children with LHA currently satisfy only basic vital needs, while a full adaptation requires additional funding for their training and getting a profession and employment. Therefore, the main way to integrate persons with LHA into the society is to conduct a comprehensive rehabilitation which would include measures in medical, social, and professional directions. Representatives of the psychological science, in the framework of their method, formulate approaches to organization and content of the psychological maintenance of integrated education of persons with LHA in higher vocational education institutions (Agavelyan, 1999). Dissertations touch the subject of psychological conditions for effective social adaptation in the integration process (Salikhova, 2003), social and psychological factors of integration of children with LHA into the society and, in view of that, establishment of a social integration model of children with profound and multiple disorders (Solovyev, 2003). T.V. Furyayeva (2008), developing the ideas of integration pedagogy, which has gained acceptance in western European countries, considers integration as a "process, tool and result of the support of special children and adolescents in their socialization and individual self-fulfilment." Referring to the opinions of N.N. Malofeyev (2011), Y.A.Strebeleva (2010), and N. D. Shmatko (2008), who consider the main direction of integration processes in Russia to be the convergence of general and special education at all levels, she highlights the principles of integrated education as a form of alternative education. The problem of using the term "inclusive education" is discussed at this period on an interdisciplinary level. For example, a comprehensive study on the legal status of persons with LHA in the area of education conducted by Y.Y. Shinkareva (2009), allowed to formulate proposals for making amendments to the Law of the Russian Federation on Education in terms of additional guarantees of their right for education.

An important factor of socialization of persons with LHA is their possibility of getting higher education. The issues of inclusively organized professional education of persons with LHA are currently also actively discussed in Russia.

Selected constructs of recognition of the phenomenon of disability

Personalist perspective

To date, Russia has accumulated an extensive theoretical and practical material on rehabilitation, social adaptation, and integration of people of different ages with disabilities of various aetiologies and nature (Volkova, 2009; Malofeyev, 2008). In general, these materials exhibit a natural transition from the medical to the social model with all the ensuing consequences.

I.P. Volkova (2009) suggests considering two basic paradigms of studying social, psychological, and personal factors of integration of persons with LHA into the society. The paradigms proposed by this author are not viewed as mutually exclusive; they may complement each other and be adopted by the society simultaneously.

The first of them is called by her "norm-centric" or "scientific." Within this paradigm, the interpretation of disability is close to the medical model; it is also treated as a defect, disorder, negative state of the body entailing an imbalance in relationships with people and with oneself, or inability to carry out the activities necessary for a society member.

The second paradigm, called "humanistic" or "personality-oriented", is close to the ideas of existential and humanistic approach.

According to I. P. Volkova (2009), significant objective criteria of social integration can include the following: social adaptation; involvement of a person with disability in the sociocultural environment expressed in the character of their social activity, access to information, and leisure; social well-being viewed as an integral characteristic of life quality in the society, which can be seen in the achievement of a positive social status, in general health indicators, availability of a job, education, successful interpersonal and familial relations, and the possibility of having productive and active leisure-time activities. The degree of social adaptation is determined by the author by level-specific characteristics of people with disability to adapt to social and living conditions, interpersonal relationships, and to themselves. Besides objective criteria, I. P. Volkova also distinguishes subjective criteria of integration: self-assessment of adaptation, self-assessment of personal and social activity, satisfaction with social interactions, quality of life, and activities (Volkova, 2009).

Thus, the current trend of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is not aimed at adapting them to the society and trying to make them meet the requirements of the norm, but at their full integration as equal, active citizens, taking their specificities and needs into consideration. This model of integration is possible only in the case of psychological readiness of the society.

Researchers acknowledge that the quality of life as a subjective assessment depends on how an individual perceives their life and on their attitude to it. Subjective criteria of assessing to Health-Related Quality of Life include factors such as perceived health, satisfaction with health, and objective criteria (i.e., the level of physical limitations, severity of a disease, etc.).

The main subject when researching quality of life in persons with LHA, are physical difficulties and environmental obstacles. Researches devoted to studying the quality of life of persons with LHA are primarily focused on the study of its objective aspects such as socioeconomic and medical indicators. At the same time, the object of this research are the external life conditions, while the inner content of human life remains at the periphery or is not taken into account at all. However, researchers from various disciplinary areas agree that the subjective aspect of quality of life has a high significance, and the psychological well-being varies greatly among people who are in similar life situations. The main problem of contemporary research on the subjective aspect of quality of life is the search for the leading factor contributing to the influence of external (physiological, socio-economic, psychological) conditions on an individual and on the subjective well-being.

Perspective of normalization of life of persons with disabilities

One of the aims and tactical tasks of the *Ministry of Health and Social Development* of the Russian Federation is to improve the quality and increase the quantity of services for rehabilitation and social integration of the people with disabilities.

Rehabilitation and habilitation of persons with disabilities and their integration into society is one of the most important directions of the state social policy. However, it is not enough to solve financial or domestic problems of persons with disabilities; this issue requires a whole range of political, economic, organizational, legal, and social measures that would significantly improve the quality of life of this social group and contribute to their selfdevelopment and realization of their life plans.

In view of the fact that professional orientation can play a very important role in an individual's socialization in the society, we should emphasize its importance in the socialization of persons with disabilities (Hrapylina, 2013).

Work plays an important role in the lives of persons with limited health abilities and has a big impact on their condition and state of health. An aptly chosen profession improves their self-esteem and a positive self-image, reduces the frequency of physical and mental health problems, and enhances life satisfaction. The adequacy of the choice and the level of professional skills affect to the overall quality of life and all its facets. Therefore, the issue of getting higher education by persons with LHA is quite a serious one.

According to A. G. Stanevsky, the university community is now facing the task of finding and developing a strategy of actions to meet the requirements of the state policy reflected in presidential and governmental decrees and other legislative acts where the priority of the social policy on persons with disabilities is their quality vocational education and employment (Stanevsky, 2000). Therefore, universities are becoming active subjects of social policy on this large category of citizens.

The introduction of inclusive education technology into Russian universities will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the process of integration of persons with LHA into the society. However, this process requires a fairly long time and special conditions. For a successful introduction of co-education of persons with LHA and healthy students, all the options of organization of the educational process should be carefully and thoroughly considered.

A successful introduction of inclusive education into Russian universities needs certain organizational and pedagogical conditions.

Today, Russian higher education institutions have barriers: physical, socio-psychological (Dargan, 2015), and cognitive.

An important aspect is the socio-psychological atmosphere in an educational institution. This refers to the nature of relationship of persons with LHA with their teachers and other students. The problem lies in the need to create a so-called psychological accessibility (i.e. creating a general positive attitude and a friendly atmosphere for students with LHA). In this regard, the Department of Defectology and Clinical Psychology of *Kazan Federal University* studies the issues of inclusive education of persons with disabilities in higher education institutions. Thus, a program of socio-psychological training has been developed aimed at consolidating students with LHA and their adaptation to other students and teaching staff, at initiating the process of professional formation and development of the students' personality (Kirillova, 2016).

Cultural construct

The learning process of students with disabilities on an equal basis with their peers without disabilities contributes to their integration in the social environment, thus solving several problems including enriching social experience, expanding social circle, increasing personal status, and creating conditions for self-realization. The problem of successful adaptation of students with LHA in higher vocational education institutions largely depends on the organization of the process of students' academic and extra-curricular activities. With the implementation of integrated education, students may experience a relationship crisis aided by stereotypical images of persons with special mental and physical development. These stereotypes are based on the idea of their low cognitive capacities and the observed learning difficulties.

In their turn, students with special mental and physical development may also experience difficulties in their relationships with fellow students because of a lack of knowledge, on the part of the latter, about personal and individual characteristics of their peers who have certain disorders. Students with normal mental and physical development are dissatisfied in these relationships because of a limited social experience of young people with developmental disorders which makes them of little interest to communicate with. The reserve of students with LHA and their lack of social activity increase the isolation (Holostova, 2006).

The symptoms of a relationship crisis between students are: an increased communication anxiety, a negative general emotional background, manifestations of aggression, intolerance, and irritability. There are two possible versions of events here that may eventually occur: either they are able to accept each other and build a constructive relationship, or, on the contrary, the relationship crisis evolves from explicit to a hidden state and exists in a veiled form.

It should be noted that the period of adaptation to new social and educational conditions in universities can be stressful not only for students with LHA, but for a large part of first-year students who feel uncomfortable, tense, keep a distance communicating with fellow students, and experience anxiety related with their inclusion to an unfamiliar environment.

In order to eliminate or minimize these problems, we have designed a project of a training program. This program is intended for use by specialists of social and psychological support services aimed at persons with limited health abilities.

Aims of the training:

- consolidation of first-year students and their adaptation to other students and teachers, getting to know the educational conditions and traditions of the Kazan Federal University;
- initiating the process of professional and personal development of students. <u>Objectives of the training</u>:
- realization of the students' needs and interests;
- forming socially and professionally important qualities in the students;
- changing the attitudes towards students with LHA and their acceptance by students who do not have disabilities;
- studying psychological characteristics of adaptation of students with LHA manifested in their individual character, dynamics, personal qualities;
- forming a positive attitude towards their future profession; creating an atmosphere of openness, free communication, friendliness. Expected results:

Due to the fact that students with LHA receiving assistance under this program may have different levels of severity of their disorder and different psychological problems, the results of the work are highly individual for each student.

As a positive result we should regard achieving short-term goals such as: quick consolidation of the collective, eliminating anxiety, and establishing contacts in the group.

The training is aimed at initiating self-determination of persons with LHA in the field of educational activity in the university and communication in the students' collective.

The <u>structure</u> of the program that we have developed is determined by the set aims and objectives, specificities of working with people having LHA.

Every training session in our program has the following structure:

– Introductory part where the participants are introduced to the topic of the session; rhythmic workout. Time: 10 to 15 minutes.

- Main part: includes exercises meeting the aims and objectives of the training program. This part takes 40 to 60 minutes of the training session.

- Final part: summarizing, exchanging impressions of the exercises, and requests for further work of the program. The final part takes 10 minutes.

Total time: 60 to 80 minutes.

The <u>number of training participants</u>: 10 to 15 people. This size of the group allows to make the subject of work basing on both common and individual communicative difficulties of the participants.

Thus, the program that we have developed can be used both in an inclusive student group and in a group of students with LHA. Moreover, this program also allows to promote psychological adaptation of first-year students without developmental disorders, which corresponds to the goals and objectives of the training and makes our program more versatile.

Conclusion

The article deals with the current issues of education, training, and socialization of persons with disabilities in Russia. Disability is considered from the standpoint of multidisciplinary historical and contemporary approaches. The Russian science in the 20th century made a huge breakthrough in the theory and practice of working with persons with LHA. Unique forming experiments performed in the tradition of cultural and historical theory and actionoriented approach allowed Russian scientists to analyse in depth the process of development of a person with physical disabilities.

The aim of contemporary social policy in Russia is inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life. One of the inalienable and recognized conditions for socialization of persons with disabilities is their education, implementation of the inclusive approach to education.

Acknowledgments

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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