

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION PROBLEMS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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ANNOTATION. It is well known that from the very first days of school, the perceptual domains that directly influence the learning process come to the forefront. When we speak of visual perception, factors such as the stability of perception, a certain level of hand-eye coordination development, visual-spatial perception, and visual memory are particularly important. In visually impaired students, the development of cognitive and emotional-volitional processes is reduced, which makes learning more challenging.

Achieving high effectiveness in forming compensatory mechanisms in a general education school is only possible through a comprehensive assessment of the actual level of psychological development of the student with a disability, as well as by developing an effective system of psychological and pedagogical support tailored to the abilities and needs of students with visual impairments.

Keywords: tactile memory test, imagination, memory, orientation, mobility.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, developing inclusive education and ensuring equal rights and opportunities for children with disabilities have become one of the priority directions of state policy. In particular, the successful inclusion of visually impaired students in the educational process, creating a favorable social environment for them, and strengthening the system of psychological support remain pressing issues in modern pedagogy and special psychology. The absence or severe reduction of visual capacity significantly affects not only a child's learning activities but also their emotional state, interpersonal relationships, independence, self-awareness, and adaptation to society.

The complexity of social-psychological adaptation in visually impaired children is associated with their sensory limitations, as they perceive the environment primarily through auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic senses. Therefore, developing competencies such as emotional stability, self-confidence, communication skills, interaction with peers, and independent mobility requires a special approach. Effective organization of this process relies on psychological counseling, family support, special pedagogical methods, and rehabilitation technologies.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that the successful integration of visually impaired students into society is closely linked to their self-realization as full-fledged individuals, social activity, and the formation of their future professional orientation. Hence, this article systematically analyzes the factors ensuring social and psychological adaptation of visually impaired students, examines existing scientific approaches, and provides effective methodological recommendations.

It is known that even slight deterioration of vision affects the development process, causing deviations in all types of cognitive activity and influencing the formation of the child's personal and emotional-volitional development. Visual impairment manifests in a decrease in the overall quantity of information received from the external world and in changes in its quality. Reduced visual perception, imagination, and visual memory limit the ability to form mental representations and recall images.

In recent years, our country has implemented necessary measures to improve the system of support for persons with disabilities based on the principle of "Human Dignity," in particular strengthening the social position of visually impaired and partially sighted children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to their origin, visual impairments are classified as congenital, caused by negative genetic factors, chromosomal pathologies, intrauterine influences, perinatal intoxications, injuries, and primarily infectious diseases (meningitis, encephalitis, influenza, tuberculosis, etc.). Congenital and acquired visual impairments belong to primary somatic defects. These anomalies, in turn, lead to secondary functional deviations (reduced visual acuity, narrowing or loss of visual fields, etc.), negatively affecting the development of several psychological processes.

Thus, a complex and functional relationship exists between somatic anomalies and psychological development. The nature of disability and associated abnormal development were first analyzed by L. S. Vygotsky. Through his studies, we learn about the structure of disability, the ratio of primary and secondary defects, and the uncertain influence of various somatic impairments on the development of structural components of the abnormal child's psyche.

For the psychology of sighted and visually impaired children, the most important position of the renowned scientist was the possibility of compensating for cultural and biological differences in abnormal child development through the creation and use of "temporary solutions for the cultural development of the abnormal child." L. S. Vygotsky wrote: "The main distinguishing feature of the mental development of an abnormal child is divergence, inconsistency, and discrepancy."

DISCUSSION

Among the leading factors in social and psychological adaptation is the development of communicative competence. In visually impaired students, speech becomes the primary means of information exchange, as they rely heavily on verbal signals to understand their surroundings. Fluency, clarity of expression, questioning, active participation in conversations, and listening skills are essential indicators of social adaptation.

Engaging children in peer collaboration, organizing tasks in pairs or groups, role-playing games, verbal training, and discussion exercises actively involve them in communication processes.

Sensory compensation, such as the development of auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic perception, plays a crucial role in enhancing adaptation. Auditory perception is key in determining spatial height, direction, distance, and tonal differences in speech. Tactile perception expands spatial representation through understanding shapes, surfaces, weight, and textures of objects. Therefore, tactile exercises, the Braille system, relief charts, and tactile instructions significantly improve cognitive activity. Social adaptation is also closely related to independent mobility skills, including navigating spaces freely, safely moving within school areas, orienting to classroom arrangements, and behaving appropriately in public spaces. Orientation exercises, sound markers, tactile pathways, and auditory navigation tools prove effective in forming these skills.

RESULTS

Visually impaired students face numerous difficulties in psychological development. The primary reason is that 90% of visual impairments are congenital or acquired at early ages. Damage to the visual organ leads to challenges in perceiving the environment, significantly reducing activity. According to N.A. Bernstein, this reduction in activity is biologically determined and complicates adaptation to the environment.

Studying the development of sighted and visually impaired individuals requires attention to psychophysiological characteristics. Their psyche reflects reality uniquely compared to normally sighted individuals. Key aspects to consider include:

Various abnormal factors (e.g., visual impairment) significantly affect the universal manifestations of the psyche, often masking or distorting the basic laws, states, and personal traits of mental processes.

The study of visually impaired individuals is complicated by the heterogeneity of this population in terms of the nature of illnesses and degree of visual function impairment.

Before describing changes in the psyche of visually impaired students, key concepts are defined. Visual acuity is understood as the ability to distinguish two bright points at minimal distance. Standard visual acuity is the ability to differentiate object details within a given angle of view per minute. Depending on visual acuity using corrective tools:

Blind: visual acuity 0–0.04

Low vision: visual acuity 0.05–0.2

Among those classified as blind:

Totally blind

Partially sighted (light perception or form recognition), visual acuity ranging from 0.005 to 0.04

The timing of blindness onset significantly affects psychological development:

Congenitally blind: lost vision before speech formation, i.e., before approximately age three

Early acquired blindness: lost vision later in life, retaining some visual memory images

The later the impairment occurs, the less impact it has on psychological development due to the gradual manifestation of abnormal factors, though compensatory adaptation is limited by age-related declines in central nervous system plasticity and dynamics.

CONCLUSION

Thus, a disability is a physical or psychological impairment that deviates from normal development. Congenital and acquired disabilities, as primary somatic defects, lead to secondary functional disturbances, negatively affecting several psychological processes. Therefore, a complex structural and functional relationship exists between somatic defects and anomalies in psychological development. Any disruption in normal development triggers compensatory functions of the body automatically. In conditions of blindness or low vision, compensation should be considered a bio-social phenomenon, i.e., a synthesis of biological and social influences.

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