

Implementing the Course “Human Rights” for Children with Special Needs under the Changed Socio-Educational Conditions

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Abstract: In this article, the authors offer specific methodological measures to improve the legal awareness of children with special needs. The problem is highlighted taking into account the current state of development and educational postmodern experience.

The main volume of the article highlights the content of the course "Human Rights" for children with disabilities and experimental testing of the effectiveness of such a course during implementation in a specialized institution.

The authors used an interactive interdisciplinary approach with a focus on communication and the satisfaction and self-sufficiency of their own needs while being aware of them. Methods of research are theoretical (generalization, analysis of the relevant literature) and practical (model of the content of the educational process, practical implementation, diagnostic methods).

We formulate the main result as follows: postcolonial society provides ample opportunities for the realization of the rights of children with disabilities, but they (especially in post-Soviet republics) are often uninformed and not even motivated to assert their rights. As part of the research, a special course entitled "Human Rights" in a changed social and educational environment (rehabilitation centre) was implemented in the educational process. After implementation, an evaluation survey was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the special course and specially created conditions in terms of improving legal knowledge and competence in comparison to children in ordinary conditions.

Persons from MSDs improved their knowledge of human rights and the normative documents regulating them; of the institutions in the state that protect human rights; developed the ability to defend their rights at an elementary level and to submit written complaints to the appropriate institutions; changed for the better their attitude toward the honor and dignity of another person; toward the duties of a conscious citizen in present-day society; developed an understanding of their own adult life prospects; and have a positive attitude toward each other.

We can recommend that rehabilitation colleagues use business games, trainings, visual aids (educational films, pictures, posters, photographs), elements of art therapy, isotherapy, music therapy; develop an information section on "Human Rights", etc.

Keywords: *cerebral palsy, educational-correctional conditions, musculoskeletal disorders, international legal acts, legal knowledge, legal behaviour, specialized course on human rights.*

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Introduction

According to the UN, around 450 million people in the world have mental or physical disorders, representing 1/10 of humanity. In Ukraine and across the world, the number of people with special needs is increasing.

The disability caused by developmental disorders implies a significant limitation of one's life activity. It leads to social maladjustment and complicates self-care, learning and acquisition of professional skills. Society should take additional steps to help persons with special needs acquire social experience and integrate into the existing system of social relations. Therefore, it is crucial to develop specific programmes, establish more rehabilitation centres and specialized educational institutions (Sarancha et al., 2021; Demchenko et al., 2021). In the postcolonial world, all the most important framework laws on ensuring the rights of children with special needs have been adopted at the international level. Yet, the executive practice of many countries pays little attention to legal literacy, which determines the relevance of this article.

Despite educational activities and social programmes implemented by state and non-governmental organizations, persons with special needs still face many problems, such as 1) low awareness of persons with special needs and their families about their rights; 2) consumerist approach of most persons with special needs and their families to the activities of state and non-governmental organizations; 3) negative public attitudes towards families with persons with special needs; 4) frustration; 5) inability to assert and defend their rights in government institutions at different levels.

The article aims to present the author's specialized course "Human Rights" and its effectiveness. The course was implemented in Ukraine, where the legal system for persons with MSDs is being reformed.

The educational goals of the specialized course "Human Rights" are the following: to familiarize persons with MSDs with international legal acts defining human rights; to help them acquire legal knowledge and develop their social interaction skills and legal behaviour patterns; to form their views about the legal profession; to teach them to assert their rights in state and public organizations; to prepare them for a full life in society.

The corrective and developmental goals of the specialized course "Human Rights" are the following: to facilitate logical and analytical thinking of pupils, improve their oral and written speech and develop their interaction skills.

The character-building goals of the specialized course "Human Rights" are the following: to help pupils to interact with peers, develop their

moral and ethical skills of behaviour in society, teach them to respect themselves and others, be responsible for their actions and realize their importance and impact on society.

This specialized course aims to make people more aware of the fact that legal education and equal opportunities for everyone in society are considered essential tasks of humanity reflected in international legal acts.

International significance of the article. The article complements and empirically confirms the opinion of rehabilitative educators from different countries in terms of empirical implementation of profile courses (Zahoor et al., 2020) and measuring the effectiveness of formation of legal consciousness (Tereshchenko et al., 2020).

Original contribution of the authors. The authors of the article proved for the first time in Eastern Europe not only the relevance of the cognitive component in respecting the rights of special children within a specific educational space, Mason, M. (1990), but also proved the effectiveness of the implementation of appropriate courses of educational character. This effectiveness is methodologically and epistemologically complementary to the current challenges of current legal teacher education (Osler, & Starkey, 2017), challenges of communicative equity regardless of specific needs and abilities, (McLeod 2018, Dixon et al., 2020; Winkler et al., 2020).

International and Ukrainian Legal Acts on Ensuring the Rights of People with Special Needs

Segregating mechanisms used to operate for some time under the conditions of the postcolonial society, which began to develop after the Second World War. In most European countries in the early 1960s, people with special needs were isolated from others in terms of their rights and social status and were educated in specialized boarding schools or other closed educational institutions. In the second half of the 1960s, the rights of people with special needs (primarily educational ones) began to be adopted at the legislative level and implemented in practice in Western Europe. Marcuse (1969) notes in this regard that “it was then that the opposition to “the capitalist system” which viewed people solely from the standpoint of economic gain originated”.

In this context, this article considers the main aspects of the legislative and practical provision of such rights in the most developed EU countries, which is implemented within the inclusive paradigm

In the UK, the complete rights to education under the inclusion of persons with special needs were only proclaimed in the 2000s. At the same

time, their implementation was a top-down process (Coles & Hancock, 2003). As it turned out in practice, educational rights are best exercised “on the spot” at the initiative of the actors in the educational process on an ascending basis. Thus, there is a contradiction. On the one hand, the implementation of inclusion is proclaimed by the government as the prerogative of the state (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). In government regulations, however, it is implemented as inclusion by choice rather than full inclusion, Tod (2002). This situation can be explained by the excessive conventionalism of legal and state institutions in the UK.

Italy was one of the first countries that started to defend the equal rights of people with special needs at the state level by integrating them into the general education system. All pupils with special needs can be educated in regular schools (except for when special care is required). The rights of young people with special needs are currently being implemented in the form of life projects within the framework of inclusion, namely, total inclusion in the social process with the consent of relatives and the action team (educational institutions, social services).

In France since the 2000s, schools have been developing and assessing the social competency of pupils to fully integrate them into society. Besides, it allows one to fully realize the rights of people with special needs. Since 2013, there has been a law in place that states that persons with developmental disabilities from childhood have the right to develop, learn, and socialize in a normal environment, while correction and social support are provided in consultation with parents within the local social environment. The latter, at the request of a person with special needs, can be both specialized and conventional with access and universal design (Ministère Education Nationale, 2008).

Germany has adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) based on the international framework laws. In each land, these laws have, to a greater or lesser extent, modified both the local legal system and the system of education and social support. It has synergistically strengthened the morally and traditionally loyal attitude towards people with special needs, who develop their personality freely, have the same rights and even benefits. Therefore, people with special needs can be seen in all social, educational, and cultural institutions, as both clients and employees.

In the post-Soviet countries, however, legal literacy for people with special needs is insufficiently implemented, even within a specially organized correctional environment.

Postmodern Aspects of Education for People with Special Needs

Today’s globalized world with its cultural, social, technological, economic, political, spatial, and demographic changes require new pedagogical (more broadly – educational) paradigms. Lamb, & Vodicka (2021) describe the so-called “critical postmodern pedagogies” that can quickly respond to a rapidly changing context. Persons with MSDs, as a very sensitive social group, need transformations in education. This is especially true in countries where the inclusion and full rights of people with special needs have only begun to be implemented. For this research, the pedagogy of hope concept is extremely relevant as an area that counteracts social resistance and promotes self-transformation and self-development. The involvement of education stakeholders, their autonomy, and ethics should become the basis of this new pedagogy.

Despite such trends, people with special needs are still treated in a negative and discriminatory manner, both in education and workplace. Demartoto (2018) collected relevant data through observations and validated it using method and data source triangulations. The researcher proved that an inclusive space is still not optimal. At the same time, this space has significant human and spatial resources to make access and prospects of people with special needs better. As noted by Demartoto (2018), it is important to improve “accessibility in the term of independency, rehabilitation, and social grant”, and maintain “social wellbeing level and equal right to grow and to develop these people’s talent, ability, and social life to develop workplace inclusion”. Also, it is essential to prioritize, and respect “pluralism, equity, dignity, and active public participation simultaneously and sustainably”, which “will lead to the realization of inclusive society”, Demartoto (2018). It is worth noting that in developing countries, the above-mentioned principles should aim to ensure the rights of people with special needs and, therefore, begin with educational work.

Researchers also note the multiplicity of subjective pedagogical practices, attitudes, and styles toward people with special needs. However, the postmodern society has significantly expanded the concept of “normality”. Manning (2011) admits that there is a contradiction between democratic ideals and bureaucratic practices of the society in recognizing the “normality” of people with special needs. This requires one to “re-inventorize” the values of classical pedagogy and healthy deconstruction of stereotypical educational ideals and beliefs. This applies not only to the content of curricula and methods of their implementation but also to

educational practices related to people with special needs (exclusion, treatment, medicalization, etc.), Manning (2011).

A separate issue remains today's technologization, which can be both a barrier and a tool for the freedom and rights of people with special needs. Some researchers have already conducted a critical and deconstructive analysis of various technologies. These technologies can destroy the barriers and expand access for people with special needs, or create unexpected new forms of isolation (Foley & Ferri, 2012). At the same time, destructive factors can be eliminated through the right to availability and choice of technologies, their global and equally accessible nature, environmental friendliness, and conceptuality.

In this regard, the postmodernist concept is very conducive to reforms in educational and social interventions in the lives of people with special needs. As noted by Murphy & Perez (2002), "postmodernism breaks with the reductionism that is inherent to the biomedical model and offers the opportunity to develop more holistic modes of diagnosis and intervention". Consequently, "disabilities can no longer be viewed in an essentialist manner, but instead must be approached as social constructions" (Murphy & Perez, 2002). In this context, one can talk about a new model and the so-called "culture of disability".

Implementing the Course "Human Rights" and Its Didactic Goal

The main objectives of the specialized course "Human Rights" are as follows: 1) to consolidate the knowledge of persons with MSDs about human rights, explain to them the links between the complete fulfilment of human rights and non-discrimination in society; 2) to develop their teamwork skills within a group with healthy persons (a model of modern society); 3) to form their views on family life and prospects of their adulthood; 4) to teach them to understand their rights and responsibilities; 5) to encourage them to respect rights and dignity of others; 6) to cultivate their active public position. At the same time, the co-location under the specially created educational and correctional conditions of the rehabilitation centre "Promin" was expected to synergistically strengthen motivation and legal literacy, compared to the CG.

The specialized course "Human Rights" uses different methods:

1. Verbal. The choice of concrete methods depended on the personal approach and the tactical educational goal. For example, a story was used, for example, when it was necessary to reveal in an accessible form the content of the concept "Human Rights", the institution of human rights protection, etc.

2. Practical. The most valid when establishing correlations with life problems and in the context of interdisciplinary interconnections: history, jurisprudence, culturology.

The specialized course “Human Rights” has been included in the system of social rehabilitation since it provides persons with MSDs with the knowledge about their rights and responsibilities and forms their views on the prospects of independent life.

Rehabilitation lessons within the specialized course “Human Rights” aimed to teach persons with MSDs to assert their rights and others’ rights, communicate with authorities and media using social skills activities. The experimenters organized business games at the stage of revision, which raised such questions as “Which of your rights has been violated?”, “Whom should I appeal to about it?”. Besides, they used group training and interactive technologies, based on the active participation of each participant and interaction between all members of the group, including the facilitator, who is called the trainer. It must be acknowledged that training sessions imply a particular improvisation and, therefore, one should carefully choose the group members. The specialized course included training sessions on such topics as “From Discrimination to the Exercise of Rights”, “Democratic Elections”, “Gender Equality”, as well as educational films (“My Right to Inclusive Education”), photographs, pictures, posters (“Filing for Disability Benefits”, “The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”), art therapy, visual art therapy, music therapy. Pupils also learned how to make an information stand, called “Human Rights”, which contains information on the main provisions of “The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, “The Concepts of Social Adaptation of Persons with Mental Disorders”, “The State Standard on Primary Education for Children in Need for Physical and (or) Mental Development Correction”.

Classes at the special course “Human Rights” were conducted in the form of circle work once a week (the total number of 34 hours, the content is shown below in Table 1)

Table 1. *Thematic planning of the specialized course “Human Rights”*

<i>Topic</i>	<i>The number of hours</i>
Introduction.	1 hr
Unit 1. Human rights: the main concepts.	5 hrs.
The concept and origin of human rights.	1 hr 2 hrs.

The main stages of development of human rights.	1 hr
Human rights in the traditions of the Ukrainian people.	1 hr
Human rights in Ukrainian legislation.	
Unit 2. Civil society and the rule-of-law state.	4 hrs.
Civil society and human rights.	1 hr
The rule-of-law state.	1 hr
The Constitution of Ukraine and human rights.	2 hrs.
Unit 3. International documents.	7 hrs.
The Universal Declaration of Human and Civil Rights:	5 hrs.
economic human rights;	1 hr
cultural human rights;	1 hr
social human rights;	1 hr
political human rights;	1 hr
civil human rights;	1 hr
children's rights.	2 hrs
Unit 4. Civil and political rights and personal freedoms.	7 hrs.
Peace and the right to life.	1 hr
The right to freedom, personal inviolability and respect for human dignity.	1 hr
The right to free movement and free choice of residence.	1 hr
The right to privacy and family life.	1 hr
The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.	1 hr
The right to freedom to profess or disseminate one's beliefs.	1 hr
The right to citizenship.	
Unit 5. Economic, social and cultural rights.	5 hrs.
The right to work.	1 hr
The right to social security and health.	1 hr
The right to a decent standard of living.	1 hr
The right to state support and protection of the family.	1 hr
The right to education.	1 hr
Unit 6. Human rights abuses and the fight against violation of rights.	4 hrs.
Crimes against humanity, peace and humanism.	1 hr
Discrimination and its manifestations.	1 hr
Racism.	1 hr
Slavery and its manifestations today.	1 hr
Unit 7. The legal profession.	4 hrs.
About the profession.	1 hr
Professional abilities and skills.	2 hrs.
Professional role-playing games.	4 hrs.
An educational trip to a legal advice office.	1 hr
Summaries.	1 hr

Source: Authors' own conception

The authors' questionnaire and expert assessment methods were used to obtain the results. The authors of this article, parents of the participants in the educational process and teachers from the rehabilitation centre, who evaluated the results of educational and correctional activities on a scale from 1 to 10, acted like experts. It is important to note that both group work (according to pedagogical observation) and the results of cognitive and project activities of its participants were subject to evaluation. Grading was first personal and then machine-readable.

The Effectiveness of the Course “Human Rights”

When mastering the course, children from MSDs were in the formative team and distanced from their parents, which corresponds to the concept of “independent living”. The Independent Living Institute (ILI) in Sweden defines this concept as a particular philosophy and social movement of persons with special needs which helps them to realize their personal and civil rights and freedoms and ensures equal opportunities for all members of society. Given that the concept of independent living implies certain remoteness, the specialists from the ILI indicate that independent living does not mean that we offer persons with special needs to do everything on their own. This concept, above all, implies that such persons have the right to the same level of control over their lives as other members of society. We must recognize that persons with functional or mental disorders are the best experts regarding their needs and lives.

Ukrainian legal acts still do not use the term “supported living” since there is no official interpretation of it. However, model regulations on the establishment of permanent and temporary stay of persons with mental disorders provide for the possibility of creating a rehabilitation centre, whose aim is to provide permanent and temporary round-the-clock care for persons with mental disorders, as well as their employment and integration into society. The authors believe that persons with MSDs need similar social services to exercise their right to independent adulthood and start a family of their own.

The article proves that social rehabilitation of children with special needs should help them to improve their communication skills, ensure their independent living in a society with the necessary support (social, medical, and legal support; domestic services), teach them to assert their rights and interests, self-analyze and perceive themselves and others positively.

During the implementation of the course, it became possible to optimize personality traits corresponding to the concept of social activity. Social activity is a complex dynamic functional system, characterized by

family life, communication, social and work activities, as well as manifestations of the individual's spiritual and physical abilities in harmony with the social environment. It includes many legal, medical, valeological, ecological categories: public activity, hygiene, healthy lifestyle, disease prevention, preventive social work, relations with nature, environmental pollution, urbanization, genetic changes, diagnostics.

At the same time, social and environmental rehabilitation is another quite popular term in the scientific literature. This type of social rehabilitation of children with special needs can be defined as specific steps aimed at creating an optimal environment for them and providing conditions for restoring social status and lost social relations. Such rehabilitation aims to provide such persons with specialized knowledge, equipment and enable them to be relatively independent in their everyday lives. One can see that these terms define almost the same area of rehabilitation. Under certain conditions, however, they may differ or include each other.

It is a known fact that children with special needs can be prepared for a full life in society if the specialists from rehabilitation centres and family members teach them to respect themselves and other people. Legal education of such children, being an integral part of the overall system of consistent education, is essential for achieving this goal.

The implemented course has made it possible to expand the opportunities for public recognition of persons with MSDs. We present the results below (Table 2).

Table 2. *The factors in public recognition for persons with MSDs*

Ways to obtain public recognition	Before study	After study
	%	%
Family	40	42.5
Creative skills	25	22.5
Spiritual beliefs	15	12.5
Science	7.5	10
Friendship	12.5	12.5

Source: Authors' own conception

Rehabilitation lessons within the specialized course "Human Rights" have paid considerable attention to expanding the views of persons with MSDs about the localization of public life of pupils from the centre. The obtained results prove a positive dynamic regarding this issue.

The article also studies how such persons have changed their views about the localization of spheres of public life and their activity in it. The motivation of the public life of persons with MSDs has changed significantly due to creating awareness regarding public activity and providing the opportunity to participate in the activities of public organizations. We present the results below (Table 3).

Table 3. *Motivation towards public life in persons with MSDs*

Motivation towards public life	Before study	After study
	%	%
Strong	20	22.5
Extremely strong	15	17.5
Moderate	42.5	37.5
Weak	12.5	15
Extremely weak	10	7.5

Source: Authors' own conception

The article also shows how their attitudes towards public life have changed. The results of the experiment are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *The localization of public life*

The localization of public life	Before study	After study
	%	%
In society	55	60
Excluded	22.5	20
On the verge of worlds of healthy persons and persons with special needs	22.5	20

Source: Authors' own conception

Rehabilitation lessons within the specialized course “Human Rights” have helped persons with MSDs to understand their place and that of others in the public area. The knowledge they gained has had a profound effect on the changes in relationships within their families. The results of the experiment are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *The role of persons with MSDs in the family*

The role in the family	Results	
	Before study	After study
	%	%
Adviser	35	37,5
Employee	25	27.5
Consumer	25	12.5
Critic	15	10
Idler	15	7.5
Referee	10	12.5
Assistant	12.5	17.5
Peacemaker	7.5	10

* Interviewees had the opportunity to choose more than once, so the sum of the percentages is greater than 100.

Source: Authors' own conception

The assessment of the obtained results allows one to draw several intermediate conclusions. First, both people who remain in the rehabilitation centre “Promin” and at home show some positive dynamics in the analyzed parameters. Secondly, people with MSDs have significantly weakened negative attitudes, perceptions, and “labels” in a specially organized correctional and educational environment, which is almost not the case outside of such conditions.

Conclusions

Thus, in the article we theoretically substantiated the feasibility of an interactive interdisciplinary course "Human Rights" for children with special needs. The article also proves that social rehabilitation of children with developmental disabilities should provide: mastering communication skills, ensuring autonomous living in society with the necessary support (social, medical, legal support, domestic services), Ermakov (1998); mastering the skills of protecting their own rights and interests, introspection and gaining the skills of positive perception of themselves and others.

The results of the experiment show that:

Thanks to the specially organized educational and correctional environment and the implementation of the special course "Human Rights", the persons from WSDs improved their knowledge, skills and legal motivation. In particular, they have mastered human rights and normative documents which regulate them; they know the institutions in the state which protect human rights; they are able to defend their rights at

elementary level and to submit written complaints to corresponding institutions; they respect honor and dignity of another person; they fulfill the obligations of a conscious citizen in today's society; they understand the perspective of their own adult life; they have a positive attitude towards each other. And all indicators exceed those of the control diffuse group (children who spontaneously master the legal sphere at home).

2. Successful assimilation of program material by WSDs persons depended mainly on: the content of the lesson, which should be coordinated with the specifics of cognitive activity, state of emotional-volitional sphere, volume of knowledge, abilities and skills meeting the special needs of WSDs persons; respect of the teacher for each pupil; interest of pupils in the lesson; consideration of individual features of each pupil; activation of mental forces and volitional efforts of WSDs persons in the process of working on creative tasks; situation of success; opportunities of a person.

Having analyzed the above, we can conclude that socialization in its general definition can be understood as a process of individuals entering society through the assimilation of social norms, roles, forms of communication and the formation of sociality as the main result of socialization, in which human creativity is carried out

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