



Известия Саратовского университета. Новая серия. Серия: Акмеология образования. Психология развития. 2024. Т. 13, вып. 1 (49). С. 97–100  
*Izvestiya of Saratov University. Educational Acmeology. Developmental Psychology*, 2024, vol. 13, iss. 1 (49), pp. 97–100  
<https://akmepsy.sgu.ru> <https://doi.org/10.18500/2304-9790-2024-13-1-97-100>, EDN: KVFMT0

Conference Proceedings

## Special education and sociocultural integration – 2023. Theory and practice of training specialists in university programs in special needs education (Report on the international scientific conference)



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**Abstract.** The problems of theoretical and practical training of specialists in special education university programs were addressed at the International Scientific Conference “Special Education and Sociocultural Integration – 2023” (October 27–28, 2023, Saratov State University). These issues bear the *relevance* to this research. *The aim* of the article is to provide an analytical review of the scientific problems raised at the International Scientific Conference “Special Education and Sociocultural Integration – 2023: Theory and Practice of Training Specialists in University Programs in Special Education”. The article describes the main commitments of the conference and the forms of their fulfillment; the article also summarizes the discussions at the plenary and panel sessions, the content of master classes, and the results of the student competition of research papers.

**Keywords:** special education, sociocultural integration, training of specialists, university program in special needs education

**Information on the authors' contribution.** Elena A. Georgitsa prepared the analysis of the conference events, wrote the text; Olga V. Yakunina analyzed the conference talks, wrote the text.

**For citation:** Georgitsa E. A., Yakunina O. V. Special education and sociocultural integration – 2023. Theory and practice of training specialists in university programs in special needs education (Report on the international scientific conference). *Izvestiya of Saratov University. Educational Acmeology. Developmental Psychology*, 2024, vol. 13, iss. 1 (49), pp. 97–100. <https://doi.org/10.18500/2304-9790-2024-13-1-97-100>, EDN: KVFMT0  
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Материалы конференции  
УДК 37.013

Специальное образование и социокультурная интеграция – 2023.

Теория и практика подготовки специалистов в системе высшего дефектологического образования  
(итоги международной научно-практической конференции)

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**Аннотация.** *Актуальность исследования* определяет постановка проблематики теоретической и практической подготовки специалистов в системе высшего дефектологического образования, выступающей главной идеей международной научно-практической конференции «Специальное образование и социокультурная интеграция – 2023» (27–28 октября 2023, Саратовский национальный исследовательский государственный университет имени Н. Г. Чернышевского). *Цель:* аналитический обзор проблемного поля международной научно-практической конференции «Специальное образование и социокультурная интеграция – 2023. Теория и практика подготовки специалистов в системе высшего дефектологического образования». Описаны основные направления конференции и формы их реализации, подведены итоги обсуждения материалов пленарных и секционных докладов, содержания мастер-классов, конкурса научно-исследовательских работ студентов.

**Ключевые слова:** специальное образование, социокультурная интеграция, подготовка специалистов, система высшего дефектологического образования

**Информация о вкладе каждого автора.** Е. А. Георгица – анализ программных мероприятий, написание текста; О. В. Якунина – анализ докладов выступающих, написание текста.



**Для цитирования:** *Georgitsa E. A., Yakunina O. V. Special education and sociocultural integration – 2023. Theory and practice of training specialists in university programs in special needs education (Report on the international scientific conference) [Георгица Е. А., Якунина О. В. Специальное образование и социокультурная интеграция – 2023. Теория и практика подготовки специалистов в системе высшего дефектологического образования (итоги международной научно-практической конференции)] // Известия Саратовского университета. Новая серия. Серия: Акмеология образования. Психология развития. 2024. Т. 13, вып. 1 (49). С. 97–100. <https://doi.org/10.18500/2304-9790-2024-13-1-97-100>, EDN: KVFMT0*

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Department of Speech Therapy and Psycholinguistics of the Faculty of Psychological, Pedagogical and Special Needs Education (Saratov State University) organized the International Scientific Conference “Special Needs Education and Sociocultural Integration – 2023: Theory and Practice of Training Specialists in University Programs in Special Needs Education” on October 27–28, 2023 in Saratov.

The conference was dedicated to the Year of the Teacher and Mentor and the 45th anniversary of the Faculty of Psychological, Pedagogical and Special Needs Education. *The purpose* of the conference was to analyze and discuss the current problems of training special education staff in the higher education system. More than 200 people from different cities of Russia and other countries gave their talks at the conference.

Conference participants mainly focused on the following: current issues of training special education teachers in the system of higher education; traditions and innovations in the system of special needs education; current problems of preschool special needs education; the role of a speech therapist in the system of modern preschool and school education; modern approaches to the organization of rehabilitation centers for children and adolescents with disabilities; training of special needs education teachers through the STEM education framework; training of future technology teachers to work in an inclusive learning environment.

The conference was held in the hybrid format mixing in-person and remote participation. Most of the speakers chose online participation.

The program of the international scientific conference included plenary and panel sessions, master classes (October 27, 2023) and the student competition of research papers (October 28, 2023).

The organizers and moderators of the plenary session were the head of the Department of Speech Therapy and Psycholinguistics, Associate Professor V. P. Kryuchkov and the Deputy Dean of the Psychological, Pedagogical and Special Needs Education, Associate Professor of the Department of Speech Therapy and Psycholinguistics O. V. Koshcheeva.

The Vice Rector for Secondary Vocational Education and Social Work of Saratov State University O. E. Nesterova addressed the participants with a welcoming speech. She highlighted the relevance and importance of the conference as a platform for discussing the issues of training special education staff in the universities, including Saratov State University. As Olga E. Nesterova emphasized, at present, Saratov State University has created “a formidable

infrastructure that enables both scientific research and educational process aimed at adaptation, rehabilitation of students with disabilities, and training of highly qualified specialists. Training of in-demand specialists is one of the key tasks of the university”.

The first part of the plenary session was opened by G. V. Kalyagina, Deputy Minister of Education of the Saratov Region, Head of the Department of Special Needs Education and Protection of the Rights of Minors. Galina V. Kalyagina spoke about the state and prospects of special needs education in the Saratov region. She emphasized that the creation of a modern infrastructure for special needs education is a priority area of work for the country and the region. She stressed that “the region provides children with special needs and children with disabilities with the opportunity to choose their educational track in the field of special, integrated and inclusive education.” She noted the important role of the central and regional medical, psychological and pedagogical commissions, which examined over 8.5 thousand children who received further assistance last academic year.

The talk by A. A. Almazova, Director of the Institute of Childhood, Head of the Department of Speech Therapy at Moscow Pedagogical State University, was devoted to the key objectives of the process aimed at transforming the system of special needs education teachers’ training – a topic that has been of particular interest to both scientists and practitioners in recent years.

The joint presentation by L. M. Kobrina, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Vice Rector for Scientific Work, Dean of the Faculty of Special (Defectological) Education of Pushkin Leningrad State University (St. Petersburg, Russia), I. V. Litvinenko, M.D., Professor, Head of the Clinic, Head of the Department of Nervous System Diseases of the Kirov Military Medical Academy of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Chief Neurologist of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Chief Researcher of the Laboratory of Special and Inclusive Education of Pushkin Leningrad State University (St. Petersburg, Russia) and S. M. Loseva, Associate Professor of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Correctional Psychology at Pushkin Leningrad State University (St. Petersburg, Russia) analyzed the current situation of training speech therapists for medical organizations. The presenters talked about the readiness of university graduates for rehabilitation work to overcome speech and other disorders in adults with severe traumatic brain injury. In addition, the speakers



discussed the need to expand and deepen the training of such specialists nationwide due to their demand.

From the practical point of view, O. V. Myaksheva, Doctor of Philology, Professor of the Department of the Russian Language, Speech Communication and Russian as a Foreign Language at Saratov State University gave an interesting talk on the topic of linguistic creativity in a child's speech that manifests the original ways in which a child explores the world. Olga V. Myaksheva analyzed numerous children's statements, which aroused genuine interest among the listeners.

The presentation by the Saratov State University (Department of Special Needs Education) alumna E. V. Bruno who now works as an instructor at A. T. Still University (Kirksville, Missouri, USA) logically followed the talks on the theoretical and methodological aspects of the special needs education teachers' training in Russia. E. V. Bruno's talk was dedicated to the specifics of the work of a speech therapist in the global space. The researcher proposed to combine the efforts of specialists from different countries in order to improve the quality of speech therapy for the people with speech disorders from various national and cultural backgrounds.

The first part of the plenary session ended with the talk by L. V. Lopatina, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Speech Therapy at Herzen University (St. Petersburg, Russia), L. B. Baryayeva, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor of the Department of Education Management at Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University (Novosibirsk, Russia) and M. G. Ivleva, Associate Professor of the Department of Speech Therapy at Herzen University (St. Petersburg, Russia). They discussed the training of speech therapists in our country that spanned over the XX century and the last decades of the XXI century. The researchers offered their vision of the prospects for special needs education teachers' training. The presenters noted that the widely discussed modernization of the contemporary educational system, including the system of special needs education, urgently requires a revision of both traditional forms and content of special education.

The second part of the plenary session was opened by the presentation by the Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Complex Rehabilitation of the Institute of Special Needs Education and Psychology of Moscow City Pedagogical University (Moscow, Russia) I. M. Yakovleva. Irina M. Yakovleva presented her view on the peculiarities of the formation of professional and personal qualities of future special education teachers.

O. E. Gribova, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Leading Researcher at the Institute of Special Pedagogy of the Russian Academy of Education (Moscow, Russia) talked about the current problems of training specialists to carry

out speech therapy examination and to formulate the results of this diagnostic testing. The researcher also discussed the process of drafting curricula and syllabi for people with disabilities as well as the work with regulatory documents in general.

In her presentation, O. I. Azova, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Speech Therapy at Moscow Psychological and Social University, Director of the "Logomed" Medical Center (Moscow, Russia) spoke about the issues of providing support to novice special needs education teachers. The talk presented clear and convincing arguments in favor of including supervision and intervention in this process as ways to improve the level of professional qualities of special needs education teachers.

I. A. Filatova, Acting Head of the Department of Speech Therapy at Moscow City Pedagogical University, gave a talk on the ways how the personality and the profession of a special needs education teacher interrelate.

The second part of the plenary session ended with the talk given by V. P. Kryuchkov, Head of the Department of Speech Therapy and Psycholinguistics at Saratov State University (Saratov, Russia). The talk was built around the nuclear and "peripheral" components of the training of speech therapists. Vladimir P. Kryuchkov strongly emphasized the importance of including such humanitarian disciplines as psycholinguistics, ethnosociolinguistics, philology, and the history of speech therapy in the system of training future specialists.

Ten concurrent sessions continued the work of the conference; more than 150 presentations were given during these sessions.

The sessions were moderated by the professors of the Department of Speech Therapy and Psycholinguistics and the Department of Special Pedagogy of the Faculty of Psychological, Pedagogical and Special Needs Education of Saratov State University as well as special needs education teachers.

Managers and employees of rehabilitation centers, kindergartens, schools, medical institutions, young researchers from different cities of Russia discussed the issues of training qualified personnel to work with people with disabilities. They also discussed the possibility of coordinating scientific and methodological aspects of the activities of specialists in the field of comprehensive rehabilitation of people with disabilities as well as issues of diagnosis, correction, recovery and prevention of speech disorders in children and adults.

In particular, both university staff and special needs education teachers discussed a number of issues including the problems of training speech therapists, psychologists, special needs education teachers in Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, issues of mentoring in speech therapy practice, inclusive volunteering to form professionally significant personal qualities of



students majoring in special needs education, and the importance of forming the professional qualities of future specialists working with people with disabilities.

The participants actively discussed the issues of innovative approaches in the diagnosis, correction and prevention of oral and written speech disorders.

The participants also paid close attention to and were engaged in lively discussion on the problem of professional burnout of specialists working with children with disabilities as well as the search for resources: external and internal support of specialists.

The subject of a separate consideration was the problem of organizing an integrated approach to working with children with autism spectrum disorders. Diagnosing the speech development of this category of children, and the most effective methods and techniques of correctional care were considered.

Much attention was paid to the sociocultural rehabilitation, adaptation and integration of people with disabilities, psychological and pedagogical support for children with disabilities, traditions and innovations in the special needs education system.

In terms of the development of the modern pedagogy of special needs, the discussion of the theoretical and practical issues of inclusive education caused heated debates.

The presentations prepared by the young researchers thematically expanded the range of problems discussed at the conference. These talks were devoted to motivation of students majoring in special needs education, as well as various aspects of the diagnosis and correction of speech disorders, delayed psychological development, ASD in preschool and school-age children.

All participants of the conference noted the high scientific and professional level of the presentations given by the speakers, the relevance and significance of the discussed problems, as well as of the proposed solutions.

Also on October 27, three master classes were held within the framework of the conference, where specialists from Moscow and Saratov shared their practical experience of working with schoolchildren with speech and visual impairments.

A master class conducted by S. N. Polyakova, a speech therapist, Deputy Director for Educational Work of the special school “Saratov Boarding School for Students in Adapted Educational Programs No. 1”, was dedicated to the use of interactive equipment while conducting speech therapy with children with severe speech impairments (within the framework of the “Dobroshkola” project).

The second master class was organized by L. N. Popova, speech therapist of the highest qualification category of the clinic “Center for Speech

Pathology and Neurorehabilitation of the Moscow Health Department” (Moscow). She shared her practical experience of overcoming dyslexia in children. She spoke in detail about the features of reading disorders in younger schoolchildren and revealed the algorithm of teaching a child with a reading disorder.

The presenters of the third master class were the specialists of the special school “Special Correctional Boarding School No. 2” (Moscow): Yulia I. Arakcheeva – educational psychologist, Svetlana A. Buldakova – speech therapist, Victoria A. Korshuk – special needs education teacher (teacher of students with visual impairments), Viktor N. Mosyagin – PE teacher. They showed the importance and effectiveness of an integrated approach of specialists to prevent children with special needs from failing at school. Their approach is aimed at correcting tempo-rhythmic organization of movements in children with visual impairments.

On October 28 the student competition of research papers was held. About 20 speakers from universities in Saratov, Moscow, and Kaliningrad participated online; over 50 participants listened to their presentations by videoconference.

There were several presentations prepared by undergraduate students which excited interest; they were devoted to motivation of students majoring in special needs education, the sociocultural integration of children with disabilities into the accessible environment of the Pushkin State Museum, the study of family values of young people with disabilities, the use of gamification to implement an individual approach in teaching sixth graders with a moderate degree of intellectual disability, the identification of violations of sound reproduction in spontaneous speech of children and adults, the use of neuroplasticity exercises as a means of correctional and developmental work with children with disabilities.

There were also several presentations prepared by graduate students which were highly appreciated; they were on the formation of self-control skills in correcting the written speech of younger schoolchildren with the delayed psychological development, the diagnosis of manifestations of ADHD (hyperactivity) in younger schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities, the prevention of addictive behavior in adolescents with intellectual disabilities, and the organization of extracurricular activities in legal education of students with hearing impairments.

Thus, the conference aroused great interest among a wide range of researchers from different Russian universities, teachers, and the staff of health and social protection systems. Relevant issues of personnel training in the higher education system were discussed, and prospects for further improvement of this process were outlined. The participants noted the high importance of the conference presentations.

The article was submitted 03.11.2023; accepted for publication 15.12.2023

Поступила в редакцию 03.11.2023; принята к публикации 15.12.2023