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**THE ROLE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN  
PROVIDING EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONAL  
EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN UKRAINE**

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**Abstract.** *The article presents the phenomenon of “inclusion” in the perspective of European integration educational processes in Ukraine. The terminological description of the basic concept of “inclusive educational environment” is presented. An inclusive educational environment is specified as a set of material, spiritual and social conditions of existence and activity of students who, regardless of their educational needs, are able to learn more effectively, to increase their social and communicative competence; this environment contributes to the fullest satisfaction of the needs of children in the development, restoration, correction and compensation of impaired functions, social adaptation, assimilation of social experience and integration into society; provides all subjects of the educational process with the opportunity of effective self-development, provides a solution to the problem of education of disabled children by adapting the educational space to the needs of each child. It has been proved that inclusive educational environment increases social competence and improves communication skills of children with special abilities; children with special needs are taught according to a more complex and in-depth curriculum, which makes the process of skills acquisition more efficient and academic achievement improved; the social perception of children with special abilities is enhanced by teaching methods in inclusive schools, where it often takes the form of group work.*

**Keywords:** *inclusion, inclusive educational environment, educational reforms, European educational space.*

**Introduction.** At present, europeanization of Ukraine is creating new challenges that necessitate further radical transformations of national education in the direction of its harmonization with European standards. Ukraine, entering the third millennium as an independent state is building a national educational system. The main priorities in the modernization of education are: democratization of the educational system; increase in its fundamentality; humanization and humanitarization of education, use of the latest teaching technologies; integration of different forms and systems of education at both national and world levels. The leading vector of reforming the Ukrainian education sector has been, above all, the humanization of education as a major European value. The search for new, more effective, diversified, open and mobile systems of education has led to the formation of a new educational paradigm, the essence of which is determined by the humanity and focus on meeting the needs

of each individual. The priority of higher education is to focus on the interests of the individual which are in line with current trends in social development. In view of this, pedagogical science is now characterized by the search for innovations aimed at the formation and development of a harmonious, creative, free personality capable of socialization and self-realization in a globalized society.

**Problem statement.** Ukraine is one of the first countries in Europe to develop a full and effective concept of inclusive learning. The inclusive educational system is the key to keeping to universal and European values. At the same time, there are a number of factors that hinder the full implementation of the concept of inclusive learning. The dissemination of inclusive education is largely hampered by the banal unwillingness of most comprehensive schools and educational establishments of other educational levels to accept students with special educational needs. First of all, there is a lack of architectural accessibility in educational establishments, lack of modern correctional and rehabilitation equipment, uncertainty with the salary of correctional teachers, insufficient number of special buses adapted for transportation of students with physical disabilities, etc.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The problems of inclusion in our country are explored in different perspectives. The basic principles of the phenomenology of “inclusion” are presented in scientific sources by the studies of A. Kolupaieva, Yu. Naida, N. Sophii and other scientists. In modern domestic scientific and pedagogical studies the phenomenon of “inclusion” is investigated, first of all, in the context of training of future primary school teachers. The training of future primary school teachers was studied by M. Bevziuk, O. Pluzhnyk, Z. Shevtsiv, V. Shyshenko et al.

Most scientific studies show that the absolute benefits of inclusive learning are: eliminating barriers in the education and support system for children with special needs; parents are involved in the learning process; children with special educational needs are given the opportunity for normal socialization, development of their strong points and talents with further integration into society, entry into professional and higher education institutions; for children with special educational needs, social competences are formed to build friendly relations with peers at school and beyond; proper ways of interaction with the team are modelled; it creates an atmosphere of calm acceptance of other people’s differences; factors that slow down the implementation of inclusion.

At the same time, psychological, pedagogical and methodological aspects of studying this complex problem have been still unresolved parts of the general problem, in particular, the degree of conformity of the development of the “inclusion” phenomenology with the requirements of European educational reforms in Ukraine requires increased scientific attention.

**The aim of the article** is to highlight the role of an inclusive educational environment in the provision of European educational reforms in Ukraine.

**Main body.** Since the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by Ukraine, there has been a growing recognition and dissemination of a social model which is more closely connected with the respect for human rights. In contrast to the medical model, the social model views the health problem as a social problem,

not as a characteristic of the individual, since the problem is caused by maladaptation of the environment, including attitudes towards people with special needs and production standards, architectural barrier and transportation. The term “special educational needs” emerges with the advent of the term “inclusive education” as a variant model of special education.

First of all, it is necessary to determine the terminological background of the problem. The Law of Ukraine “On Education” states that an inclusive educational environment is a set of conditions, methods and means of their implementation for joint learning, education and development of educational recipients, taking into account their needs and opportunities [1].

From now on, Ukrainian children with special educational needs have the full right to receive education in all educational institutions, including free of charge in state and communal services, regardless of their “disability”. These children also have the possibility of introducing distant and individual forms of education, obtaining psychological, pedagogical and correctional development assistance, creating inclusive and special groups (classes) in comprehensive educational institutions and “adjusting” secondary schools and classes to suit their needs, that is, revision of architectural redevelopment, hiring additional workers (correctional educators, tutors, psychologists), adaptation of curricula, methods and forms of study, use of special education resources, partnership with the community, etc.

The term “inclusive educational environment” can be defined as the set of material, spiritual and social conditions of existence and activity of students who, regardless of their educational needs, are able to learn more effectively, to increase their social and communicative competence; this environment contributes to the fullest satisfaction of the needs of children in the development, restoration, correction and compensation of impaired functions, social adaptation, assimilation of social experience and integration into society; provides all subjects of the educational process with the possibility of effective self-development, provides a solution to the problem of education of disabled children by adapting the educational space to the needs of each child [6].

We agree with I. Kalinichenko’s view that the purpose of this environment is to be oriented to the individual’s development and to respond to the demands of the social environment and person’s expectations. The educational environment will only then be inclusive, the author continues, when it has a number of features: a planned and organized physical space where children can safely move during group and individual lessons; a favorable social and emotional climate; ensured conditions for children to work together and help each other to achieve a positive result [3].

We like the ideas of the leading scientists, the founders of the direction of scientific study of the phenomenon “inclusion”. “Inclusive education is, first and foremost, the right of any child to obtain high-quality educational and other services at the place of residence and, accordingly, it is the state’s obligation to meet these requirements. In addition, inclusive education has a number of benefits for all participants in the educational process – children, parents, educators and society at large. Inclusive education is an ongoing process of identifying and overcoming obstacles for the most significant participation of everybody in the educational

process,” explains Nataliia Sofii, the director of the All-Ukrainian Foundation “Step by Step” [2, p. 90].

The term “child with special educational needs” should also be defined; it is the one that has a deviation from the average level of ability to perceive and assimilate educational information, perform educational tasks; deviation of movement opportunities; deviation of opportunities for self-care; deviation of opportunities for communication; herewith, all available deviations are conditioned by a documented illnesses and developmental disorders that are fixed in due course, and not by the student’s personal traits or wishes of his parents (or other subjective reasons). Educating such a child requires more resources from society than a child without learning disabilities. A child with musculoskeletal disorders may have different types of learning disabilities, expressed to different extent.

**Conclusions.** The leading tendency in the development of the modern domestic educational system is the transition to a non-classical paradigm, the purpose of which is not erudite, but a person of high culture. In view of this, the role of humanitarian knowledge, culture-conformity of the educational process is increasing today. It is humanization priority as the leading European vector of educational reform that the state gives a priority. The humanization of education as a marker of a comprehensive “humanization” of the country’s educational space, is at the same time a marker of Ukraine’s transition from a “country of knowledge” to a “country of freedom of learning”. Freedom and democratic learning, individualization, equal opportunities for everyone are the main European values. Ukraine is striving for and is pursuing reforms, in particular, in the field of education. Therefore, humanization is aimed at respecting the personality of the pupil, forming his or her independence, fully revealing the educational needs and interests of students. The values of child-centeredness and humanistic values are the basis for reforming the new Ukrainian school. In particular, the purpose of comprehensive secondary education is to develop comprehensively, educate and socialize a person who is aware of himself as a citizen of Ukraine, capable of living in society and of civilized interaction with nature, striving for self-improvement and lifelong learning, ready for conscious and self-conscious life choice, working and civil activity.

We argue that in an inclusive educational environment, social competence is enhanced and communication skills of children with excellent abilities are improved; children with special needs are taught according to a more complex and in-depth curriculum making the process of skills acquisition more efficient and academic achievement improved; the social perception of children with special abilities is enhanced by teaching methods in inclusive schools, where it often takes the form of group work. Working in small groups, children learn seeing the person, not their disability, and begin to realize that there is much in common between them and children with disabilities; friendly relationships between children with disabilities and those without such disabilities are usually more likely to develop in an inclusive environment. Studies have shown that children in an inclusive setting have more reliable and lasting connections with friends than children in a segregated setting. This is especially true when children attend a local school in their area and are more able to see their friends after class.

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