

# The Coping Behavior Strategy of Self-Realization of Students with Disabilities

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## Abstract.

The article considers coping behavior strategies of self-realization of students with disabilities under the conditions of inclusive education and as a part of training future specialists in the socioeconomic sphere of activity in the “person-person” system. The construction and systematization methods are used that are focused on self-awareness, self-assessment, independence, self-esteem, self-respect and self-realization. It was determined that coping strategies (problem-oriented and emotionally-oriented) contribute to overcoming difficulties in the activities of students with disabilities who are focused on self-realization in the process of creative activity. For the first time the main components of coping strategies in work with disabled students were identified. They include: a focus on a constructive solution of the problem; system diagnostics and the choice of an effective way to overcome stress on its basis; reasonable goal setting; motivation formation, the acquisition of knowledge and experience to overcome stressful situations; diversification of possible ways to solve arising problems, taking into account individual characteristics of students.

**Keywords:** socioeconomic sphere of activity, inclusive education, students, creative self-realization, coping behavior, coping strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Acquiring education by persons with disabilities is an important area of activity of universities aimed at successful socialization of young people, leading to their full participation in social life and to effective self-realization in various types of professional activity. In accordance with the Federal Law No. 46-FL of 04.05.2012 “On Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, each university undertakes a set of measures to ensure the necessary level of livelihoods and social protection of disabled people and people with special health needs.

Recently there has been increasing interest in the problem of disabled students’ self-realization in the process of studying in an educational organization of the socioeconomic sphere of activity. Special demands are placed on the specialists of socioeconomic professions of the “person-person” system due to the fact that other people are the object of their work, and the functional duties of such specialists include “managing, teaching and educating people; informational, social and medical services for people” [1, p. 78-80].

Productive forms of self-realization of an individual with disabilities include creative activity (musical and visual arts, the activities of masters of art and crafts, etc.) [2]. In this regard, the source of the process of self-realization of disabled students consists in their personal consciousness (L. S. Vygotsky, A. N. Leontiev, K. Rogers, etc.). Scientists claim that a person must manage his own meanings, construct and systematize them based on his own decisions. In the context of the self-concept (R. Burns), personality is an integral quality that includes self-awareness, self-assessment, independence, self-esteem, self-respect and self-realization. The self-concept is based on the fact that a person takes into account the subject’s awareness of his personal physical, creative, intellectual and other capacities based on the self-assessment of external and internal factors affecting a person [3]. The process of enhancing self-aligning is in the center of understanding the idea of self-realization of a person with disabilities in higher education: the person’s refusal to realize his potential has a detrimental effect on the process of self-realization, leading to degradation and stress. This problem is particularly acute for students with disabilities who, due to their physical disabilities, cannot always find the strength or desire for self-development and self-realization [4].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The concept of “self-actualization” and “self-realization” was first introduced by a neurophysiologist K. Goldstein who practiced the treatment of the effects of traumatic brain injuries. The author interpreted the concept of “self-actualization” as the activation of certain internal resources of the body. The term “self-realization” was first considered in 1902 in “the Dictionary on Philosophy and Psychology”, in which the relationship between the concepts of self-actualization and self-realization was clarified. Self-realization is mental activity, whereas self-actualization is activity as a process that has a significant practical result. Consequently, self-realization is manifested in the construction and adjustment of one’s own life plan, in the awareness of the results of the previous stage of activity. In this regard, self-actualization and self-realization are two sides of a single process of development and growth, the result of which includes the disclosure and realization of individual potential.

## RESULTS

We define self-realization of students with disabilities as actions aimed at achieving a specific goal. A number of researchers indicate that the most effective methods of self-realization of people with disabilities include creativity, which is an attribute of human activity. Creativity is a derivative in the realization of unique potential abilities by an individual in a certain area and is directly related to the realization of the human potencies and each stage of self-realization is accompanied by a specific emotional reaction. Thus, when achieving positive results of creative activity, a positive background is created that stimulates subsequent actions. At the same time, failures, which are inevitable during self-realization in creative activity, can provoke negative emotions and sometimes emotional stress. The very process of creativity contributes to self-determination, self-expression and self-realization of an individual, regardless of physical and intellectual abilities. The introduction to various types of creativity such as art, musical creativity, the introduction to folk crafts through one’s own practice is an effective means of self-realization [5].

## DISCUSSION

It should be noted that in professional training of students with disabilities in educational organizations of the socioeconomic sphere, the problem of psychological security is significant since it is closely connected with the emotional comfort of an individual. The creative process is not always the so-called "zone of emotional comfort": the search for oneself, the desire to master a unique creative style, reflections on one's place in art, etc. act as a cause of stress. Typical ways of human behavior in stressful situations aimed at mastering the requirements of a situation include coping behavior, which is commonly understood as purposeful behavior that allows students with disabilities to use conscious strategies to cope with stress or difficult life situations.

In Western psychology, the term "Bewältigung" (overcoming) has been used since the second half of the 20th century. Russian scientists interpret coping behavior as psychological coping with stress. The term "stress" that is so widespread nowadays was first introduced into scientific use by an English scientist of the XVII century Robert Hooke regarding objects that experience stress and resist it. The concept of "stress" is associated with the body's response to the requirements placed on it [6]. As a rule, emotional stress provokes a physical impact on a person. Under emotional stress there is a situation associated with complex mental processes that provide a person with an assessment of the stimulus and its comparison with previous experience. Effective incentives for creative self-realization of students with disabilities include: self-knowledge and self-determination incentives contributing to the possibility of free choice of the trajectory of creative potential; self-management incentive contributing to self-assessment and adjustment of individual training programs; self-improvement incentive focused on planning one's own creative activities.

The activity of future specialists of the socioeconomic sphere, especially of creative workers, is always associated with the presentation of their work results, whether it is a concert performance and overcoming concert unrest [7], or the development of tourism projects in the context of inclusive tourism [8]. The problem of training and retraining future teachers to work with children with disabilities in an inclusive education situation requires special consideration [9]. It is important to have clearly defined incentives to develop coping behavior aimed at overcoming the emerging sensations from possible threats that are found on the basis of the discrepancy between the requirements of the environment and the student's needs, between his mental and physical resources that are necessary for creative self-realization and self-improvement. The strategy of coping behavior in this case depends on the unique individual experience, personal characteristics of character, degree of giftedness, will, etc., which form an important psychological mechanism to overcome stress.

Stress in professional activity is determined by individual assessment and individual interpretation of one's own work results, which is a stimulus for creative self-realization. Such stress arises due to the interaction of a subject with a wide range of creative tasks solved by students with disabilities in the process of educational and creative activity. Everyday creative events are always connected with the situation of "testing" that requires new efforts or new resources, which later may appear even as desirable ones (creative excitement, positive feedback, recognition, internal satisfaction with the results of one's own creativity).

We consider overcoming difficulties in the activities of students with disabilities on the basis of the analysis of coping behavior or coping mechanisms and taking into account the coping strategy of two main types proposed by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman – problem-focused copying and emotional-focused coping [10]. The authors justify eight coping strategies:

- planning the solution of the problem (the analytical approach, the desire to organize one's own behavior through algorithmization);
- confrontational coping (overcoming the manifestations of aggression in solving a life or creative situation);
- accepting responsibility (awareness of readiness to take responsibility for the results of one's own behavior);
- self-control (implementing personal resources aimed at self-regulation and control);
- positive reevaluating (the analysis of a situation from a positive point of view);
- searching for social support (recognition of the significance of creative manifestations on the part of teachers, mentors, friends, etc.);
- distancing (abstracting away from understanding a situation);
- escaping-avoiding (insecurity and fear impeding the creative potential).

In the practical work with students coping strategies provide for the implementation of diagnostics with subsequent analysis of the level of anxiety and stress that accompanies students with disabilities in the process of carrying out creative activities in the educational process. Understanding of the existing problem and projections of subsequent actions aimed at its constructive solution should become the next step in defining a coping strategy. Taking into account the phased implementation of coping strategies, its main components were developed:

- the choice of an effective way to overcome stress with the acquisition of experience aimed at realizing personal potential on the basis of the diagnostics and analysis of the existing problem;
- reasonable goal setting with the formulation and definition of possible intermediate results;
- the formation of motivation aimed at the desire to unleash one's own creative abilities, the acquisition of knowledge and experience to overcome stressful situations that hinder creative self-realization;
- the diversification of possible ways to solve the problem on the basis of the individual and differentiated approaches to the process of self-realization of students with disabilities in higher education organizations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Consequently, when determining the coping behavior strategy of self-realization of students with disabilities in higher education organizations, it should be noted that coping strategies are understood independently and imply the desire of an individual to cope, get used to, overcome stressful situations or evade them in the process of creative activity. Coping strategies affect the emotional state of students and, at the same time, the emotional state at the moment of anxiety influences the formation of coping education. In the process of implementing coping behavior students actively comprehend their creative abilities aimed at assessing their productivity and at building vectors of individual development and self-realization, which contributes to the intensification of adaptation to various situations. Thus, coping behavior is formed on the basis of the use of coping strategies and is an indicator of the experience gained by students with disabilities in higher education organizations.

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