

## THE ROLE OF THE SPECIAL TEACHER IN THE FORMATION OF MOTIVATION FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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**Abstract.** Motivation for learning activities of students with intellectual disabilities is one of the factors of their success and development. Especially relevant is the motivation of students during distance learning, which is due to their psychophysical features. The study shows that special teachers understand the importance of motivation in achieving academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities, forming their skills to overcome difficulties, and developing their personality. Students with intellectual disabilities are motivated to learn differently from their peers with typical development. These features require from the correctional teacher much greater efforts in stimulating students to assimilate knowledge and skills; constant support of cognitive interests of students, overcoming their passivity, developing skills of independence, forming of initiative. It is established that the role of the special teacher in the formation of motivation of educational activity of students with intellectual disabilities is decisive, in particular through such features of students as: low level of cognitive activity, inertia of nervous processes, lack of formation of logical connections. The prospects of scientific research are the development of an integral system of correctional and developmental work, which will ensure the formation of all types of motivation of educational activities for this category of students.

*Keywords:* the special teacher; motivation; educational activity; students with intellectual disabilities; distance learning; teacher's personality

In the theory and practice of education, it is studied that the educational activity of schoolchildren directly depends on the motivational factors of learning – Bozhovych, L. (2008); Kaniuk, S. (2002); Makarevych, O. (2006); Stamatov, R. (2014); Krstev, A. (2018).

One of the proven factors of students' interest in learning is the teacher's personality. For example, Leontiev A. (2001) determined that optimal pedagogical communication encourages students to the creative nature of educational activities, provides a favorable emotional climate in the team. Scientists constantly confirm the leading role of teachers in the formation of moral values and traits of students (Surgova, Faichuk 2020; Popovska, Popovski 2021).

The influence of the teacher's personality on the motivation of learning, and as a result on its effectiveness, is especially relevant in the practice of education of children with intellectual disabilities. This is due to the psychophysical features of these students, in particular their inertia, low level of cognitive activity and needs, lack of independence, lack of consciousness in mastering knowledge and skills, which leads to formal or insufficient motivation (Synov & Bondar 2015; Myronova 2022). A clear reason for the significant influence of teachers on the behavior and activities of students with intellectual disabilities is their increased ability to imitate. However, personally influencing students, the teacher should form their cognitive and social motives for the success of educational activities. This issue is extremely relevant during distance learning, because the teacher communicates with children indirectly through the screen. ***The aim of the study*** was studying the opinion of special teachers about the motivation factors of the educational activity of students with intellectual disabilities and understanding their role in its formation.

To achieve this goal, we used the following methods: theoretical analysis of the problem of motivation of educational activity of schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities; a survey of teachers; a conversation with students; quantitative and qualitative analysis of research results.

In the course of theoretical analysis of the research problem, we studied literature sources to establish the features of motivation of educational activity of students with intellectual disabilities, its dependence on objective and subjective factors.

***The survey of teachers of special institutions*** where children with intellectual disabilities study was conducted using the Google Forms. It was anonymous and contained 11 questions aimed at studying the following aspects:

- assessment of the role of motivation for students' learning activities in achieving success and factors that affect it;
- dependence of the motivation for learning activities on the level of development of the student's intelligence;
- understanding their role in increasing the motivation for students' learning activities and the arsenal of methods used for this purpose;
- assessment of the teacher's personality qualities, on which the motivation of students' learning depends;
- motivation difficulties during distance learning;

– determining the opinion on the role of parents of children in the formation of motivation.

During *the conversation with students*, we found out whether they like learning and how much their interest in learning depends on the personality of the teacher. Students' answers were recorded, after that qualitative analysis and comparison was carried out.

To process the results of the study, we performed quantitative and qualitative analysis, methods of mathematical statistics.

Theoretical analysis of the research problem has shown that researchers of the problems of educational activity of schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities indicate violations of all groups of motives (Synov & Matvieieva 2008; Dokuchyna 2015; Pantelis 2018; Kobylchenko & Omelchenko 2020). Cognitive motives are influenced by the underdevelopment of students' cognitive activity, which is why they do not seek to acquire new knowledge and methods of action, do not delve into the essence of phenomena. The lack of formation of social motives is caused by a weak will, a lack of understanding of the role of learning in achieving life goals. Students with intellectual disabilities are dominated by external narrow motives aimed at receiving praise from the teacher, avoiding failures, meeting the needs for formal success factors (a good backpack, new stationery, etc.). The encouraging power of motives is quite low, and their hierarchy is not formed. The activity of students with intellectual disabilities, especially in primary school age, is quite dependent on the stimulation of the teacher and his personality. However, in the modern theory of special pedagogy of targeted research, the role of special teacher in the forming of motivation of schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities was not realized.

The survey involved 124 special teachers from 5 special institutions in different regions of Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk, Odessa, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi regions). Let us describe the results of the study.

Answering the question about the role of motivation for learning activities of students with intellectual disabilities in achieving their success, most teachers said that this role is one of the leading and justified their opinion as follows: “If there is a strong motivation, then the child has a desire to achieve greater success”; “without motivation for learning activities, the level of success decreases”; “motivation is the key to successful learning”; “future motivation does not work, you need to constantly convince that knowledge is needed now and already”; “positive motivation improves the quality of learning”; “motivation affects the development of a child's personality.” However, correctional teachers noted that the motivation for learning activities of students with intellectual disabilities is low and rarely aimed at achieving success.

The study of the opinion of the respondents regarding the factors that influence the motivation of students' educational activities was presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The views of special teachers on the factors of motivation of educational activity of students with intellectual disabilities

Motivation factor	Selection of respondents (%)
Teacher's personality	88,1%
Learning process	59,5%
Marks	57,1%
Communication with peers	52,4%
Learning new things	38,1%
A combination of different factors	2,4%
Parental support	2,4%
Teacher's personal interest and ability to present the material to the student in an interesting way	2,4%

Therefore, 73.8% of teachers believe that the motivation for learning activities depends on the level of development of the student's intelligence. About 26.2% of respondents do not share this opinion.

There are about 95.2% of respondents who believe that a teacher can influence the increase in motivation for students' learning activities.

Among the methods of increasing the motivation of students with intellectual disabilities, teachers use the following: "praise, positive attitude, encouragement"; "cognitive games, educational discussions"; "creating situations of emotional and moral experiences, cognitive novelty, interest"; "work ahead of mistakes, not on their correction; praise, faith in students"; "positive examples of successful students"; "using interactive technologies, creative tasks for high school students"; "introducing interesting material to the learning process"; "collective types of work"; "individual approach, showing the child his own achievements"; "practical application of knowledge in life"; "creating problem situations and success situations"; "studying the material in a playful way"; "using computer technologies, didactic games", etc.

Respondents noted that the teacher's personality is a significant factor in influencing students and named the most acceptable qualities of the teacher's personality that positively affect the motivation for students' learning activities (table 2).

**Table 2.** Respondents' views on the qualities of the teacher's personality, which have a positive effect the motivation of students' educational activities

<b>Positive qualities of the teacher's personality</b>	<b>Selection of respondents (%)</b>
Creativity	88,1%
Ability to collaborate	85,7%
Tolerance	78,6%
Patience	73,8%
A sense of justice	69%
Stediness	69%
Observation skills	59,5%
Optimism	54,8%
Responsibility	50%
Perseverance	50%
Artistry	50%
Empathy	31%
Determination	28,6%
Complex of qualities	2,4%

Respondents also identified personality qualities that negatively affect the motivation of students' educational activities (Table 3).

**Table 3.** The views of respondents regarding the qualities of the teacher's personality, that negatively affect the motivation of students' educational activities

<b>Negative qualities of the teacher's personality</b>	<b>Selection of respondents (y %)</b>
Rudeness	88,1%
Aggressiveness	85,7%
Incompetence	81%
Bias	78,6%
Irresponsibility	78,6%
Imbalance	73,8%
Arrogance	66,7%
Immorality	59,5%
Absent-mindedness	50%
Indifference	2,4%

To the question “Is motivation the same in traditional and distance learning?” about 71.4% of respondents answered “no”, 14.3% – “yes”, 14.3% – “difficult to

answer”. Teachers expressed the unanimous opinion that students with intellectual disabilities had significantly lower motivation for distance learning, it quickly faded, and their academic performance was also lower.

In order to increase students' motivation for distance learning, respondents use various methods of encouragement and methods of work, in particular:

- *creating special videos and tutorials for performing practical work;*
- *programmable tasks in electronic form, after which an incentive image immediately appears;*
- *personalization and specification of tasks;*
- *changing verbal teaching methods from monologue to dialogic;*
- *more frequent use of praise for a completed task;*
- *increasing the time of deadlines for performance of work*
- *maximum visual clarity of the material;*
- *simplification of material submission forms;*
- *reducing the volume of material for assimilation, its specification;*
- *teaching children to use online resources;*
- *avoiding student overload;*
- *providing student feedback;*
- *extracurricular communication, encouragement, praise, cooperation with parents.*

All respondents noted that during distance learning, students feel the need for additional communication with the teacher. An individual approach to students and the involvement of parents in helping children perform homework becomes a significant necessity.

Respondents believe that parents play an important role in forming a child's learning motivation. Teachers explained this as follows: “Parents play an important role, because they know how to motivate their children to learn”; “Parents are equal participants in the educational process and should form motivation for their child to learn on an equal basis with teachers.”

Respondents also spoke about negative trends in distance learning, which reduce students' motivation. In particular: 1) some parents are excluded from helping children, which is why they cannot cope with difficulties and their cognitive interests are reduced; 2) some parents perform educational tasks instead of children, which is why they not only do not form learning skills, but also consumer motives appear.

The respondents believe that in order to form educational motivation, parents should cooperate with teachers, encourage children, encourage their independence and use of acquired knowledge at home; help the child to understand the causes of difficulties and failures and overcome them.

We also had conversations with high school students with intellectual disabilities (98 students in total). Students replied that they liked learning, although they did not really like math or language lessons.

100% high school students do not like distance learning; they find it difficult and boring. To the question: “Why do you not like distance learning?”, students answered: “The teacher pays little attention to me”; “I have to work a lot on my own”; “I want to spend more time with teachers and friends”.

In the conversation, special attention was paid to the questions “What motivates you to study?”, “Which teachers' lessons do you like?”. Student's answers mostly related to their attitude towards teachers and their teaching methods, for example: “I like lessons where the teacher offers games”; “I do even boring tasks because the teacher tells me how I will need them after school”; “If I like the teacher, I study”; “I don't want to upset the teacher, because she is kind.” The students also named those personal qualities of teachers that encourage them to study, in particular: “kindness”, “justice”, “demandingness”, “attentiveness”, “sense of humor”, “ability to come up with something interesting”.

### **Conclusions and summary**

Analysis of the problem of forming motivation for learning activities of students with intellectual disabilities in theory and practical research indicate its extreme importance. Especially relevant is the motivation of students during distance learning, since it is one of the factors of its quality.

Special teachers note the importance of motivating learning activities in achieving the success of students with intellectual disabilities, forming their skills to overcome difficulties and obstacles, and developing their personality. However, respondents noted that the motivation to learn of students with intellectual disabilities is different from their peers with normotypic development. These features require from the teacher of a special school much greater efforts in stimulating students to assimilate knowledge and skills; using techniques to constantly support the cognitive interests of students, overcoming their passivity, developing skills of independence, forming initiative in learning.

The teacher's personality is a significant factor of positive motivation to learn, which was noted by both teachers themselves and students with intellectual disabilities. It is interesting that students' interest in lessons is directly related to the attitude to the teacher, the qualities of his personality. During distance learning, students' parents play an important motivational role. At the same time, if they cooperate with the teacher, then this role is positive, but if not, they negatively affect the child's attitude to learning.

So, the role of a special teacher in the formation of motivation for learning activities of students with intellectual disabilities is crucial, in particular through such psychophysical features of students as: low level of their cognitive activity, inertia of nervous processes, lack of formation of logical connections. The prospects of scientific research are the development of a

holistic, consistent system of correctional and developmental work that could ensure the formation of all types of motivation for educational activities of this category of students.

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