

# СПЕЦИАЛЬНАЯ КОРРЕКЦИОННАЯ ПЕДАГОГИКА

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## INDIVIDUALLY ADAPTED CURRICULUM FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Abstract.** *The aim of this study is to analyse and discuss, with regard to the Curriculum Relation Model proposed by Berit Johnsen, how to plan a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum related to class curriculum as a means to realise the international principle of inclusive education.*

**Methods.** *The methods involve scientific and pedagogical analyses of one of the recent and sophisticated theories relating to the best model of an adapted curriculum and literature review for the international principle of inclusive education.*

**Results.** *Detailed investigation of Curriculum Relation Model reveals that this model involves all relevant aspects which should be taken into consideration when curriculum needs adaptation within inclusive education setting all over the world. An extension of the model with all the relevant aspects (the pupil/s, educational intentions, educational content, methods and organisation, assessment, communication, care and context/frame factors) makes it an ideal tool for a teacher/special needs educator to plan meaningful and individually adapted curriculum with a full relation to class curriculum. As for the international principle of inclusive education, literature review suggest that there are several international declarations and other relevant documents proposed by the United Nations regarding the rights of children with special needs to quality education without being exposed to any kinds of discrimination.*

**Scientific novelty.** *Scientific novelty of the study involves a fresh innovation in the sphere of curriculum development which still keeps its importance urgency in the countries initiating reforms in education.*

*Practical significance.* Currently, inclusive education is an intensively discussed issue almost in all the countries. Although inclusive education has a history of couple of decades, some countries are at the beginning of inclusive education initiation. This is a point they come across quite a lot challenging issues one of which is the proper and effective adaptation of the curriculum. From this perspective, Curriculum Relation Model proposes a brilliant idea.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, adapted curriculum, children with special needs, teaching methods.

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## **ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНО АДАптиРОВАННЫЙ КУРРИКУЛУМ ДЛЯ ИНКЛЮЗИВНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ**

**Аннотация.** Целью изложенного в статье исследования является анализ и обсуждение проблемы индивидуального планирования изучения в конкретном классе учебной программы. Данное планирование рассматривается с позиций адаптированного куррикулума – средства реализации международного принципа инклюзивного образования.

**Методы,** использованные в работе, включают обзор зарубежной литературы о различных аспектах инклюзивного образования и обобщение данного материала; научно-педагогический анализ одной из передовых теорий трансформации общего образования, основанной на понимании, что инвалиды в современном обществе могут (и должны) быть вовлечены в социум.

**Результаты.** Подробное изучение модели куррикулума, предложенной Берит Йонсен, показало, что в ней учтены все аспекты, которые должны быть приняты во внимание в период освоения методов и форм инклюзивного образования в условиях общей школы. Эта модель, подкрепленная соответствующими учебниками, учебными пособиями, содержательным и организационным методическими блоками, комплексом критериев и показателей оценки качества обучения, технологиями и средствами коммуникации, является идеальным инструментом для учителя при планировании значимых и индивидуально адаптированных программ. Обзор литературы показал эффективность реализации разработанных и заявленных Организацией Объединенных Наций деклараций и других международных документов, касающихся инклюзивного образования и соблюдения прав детей с особыми потребностями. Главная цель данных нормативных актов – исключение каких-либо видов дискриминации учащихся с ограниченными возможностями.

*Научная новизна и практическая значимость.* Новизна и актуальность работы заключаются в инновационных предложениях по разработке учебных программ общей школы с инклюзивным обучением, ориентированных на гуманизацию человеческого сообщества.

В настоящее время вопросы инклюзивного образования широко и активно обсуждаются во всех развитых странах. В некоторых из них такое образование насчитывает историю в несколько десятилетий. Другие государства находятся только в начале пути по освоению идей и методов подобного обучения и воспитания подрастающего поколения. Для стран, приступивших к реформам в сфере образования, очень важен поиск путей правильного и эффективного приспособления модели куррикулума к учебному процессу для успешной социализации детей и подростков.

**Ключевые слова:** инклюзивное образование, адаптированный куррикулум, дети с особыми потребностями, методы обучения.

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## Introduction

There is a distinctly declared agreement in the world that all children have the right to education. An estimated 40 million of the 115 million out-of-school children have disabilities. UNESCO suggests that more than 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), the UN Declaration in the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (WPA, 1982) adopted by the UN General Assembly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and UNESCO's Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) form strong basis for international legal standards on disability and function as critical documents providing children with disabilities the right to education and abolish discrimination against them. UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities emphasizes principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings (UN, Standard Rules, 1993). But UN Guidelines for Inclusion provides the clearest statement: "Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" [13, p. 21]. Below I will consider international and other principles which function as leading tools for inclusive ed-

ucation and discuss how to plan a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum for inclusion.

### **International principles of inclusive education**

As our purpose is to plan a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum to realise the international principle of inclusive education, then we should first look into these principles mainly relating to our case, individually adapted curriculum, which are defined in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action:

1) the guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions;

2) special needs education incorporates the proven principles of sound pedagogy from which all children may benefit;

3) the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have;

4) within inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive what ever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education;

5) special attention should be paid to the needs of children and youth with severe or multiple disabilities;

6) curricula should be adapted to children's needs, not vice versa;

7) children with special needs should receive additional instructional support in the context of the regular curriculum, not a different curriculum.

Of course, there are more principles apart from above-mentioned ones which are useful references and guides to design and realise inclusive curriculum. What generally features above principals is an emphasis on individual needs of children with disabilities and the necessity to address to their needs within education policy and curriculum. Studies also suggest two relevant factors for successful inclusion: the quality of the programme and the extent to which the general education system accommodates the academic and social needs of a diverse range of young people with disabilities and SNE. Lipsky and Gartner' report on the National Study of Inclusive Education reviewed about 1.000 school districts and produced seven factors for inclusion: visionary leadership; collaboration; refocused use of assessment; support for staff and students; funding; effective parental involvement; use of effective programme modules and classroom practices [13].

A meaningful curriculum is one that gives a pupil a good and comprehensive understanding of the teaching material [1]. To make a curriculum

meaningful it must be adapted to the interests, strength and needs of individuals, so that teaching-learning process becomes attractive and interesting. This technique keeps learners involved in teaching process and classroom activities. For the sake of various technique of educational adaptation, a teacher can (1) adapt the learning environment to create an appropriate setting in which to learn, (2) change the actual content of lessons or the specific knowledge being taught, (3) adapt teaching strategies, and (4) introduce technology that meets the special needs of individuals with exceptionalities [9]. As for relation of the individual curriculum to the class curriculum, first a teacher needs to analyze frame factors and class curriculum, and plan an individual curriculum which conforms to the principles and aspects of these two factors.

### The Curriculum Relation Model

To build a sound and full relation between individual and class curriculum a teacher/special needs educator needs empirically tested model which fills all the gaps between the two curricula. There are a number of models, with advantages and disadvantages, for planning inclusive curriculum with relation to class curriculum. Understanding the reality that there is not an ideal model which is able to illustrate reality with all its complexity I find the Curriculum Relation Model by Berit Johnsen (Figure 1) in which most necessary aspects for meaningful and individually adapted curriculum are reflected. In this model the main areas are: *the pupil/s, educational intentions, educational content, methods and organisation, assessment, communication, care and context/frame factors* (figure 1). The seven aspects are embraced by contextual aspects within which the inner activity of schooling is situated [8].

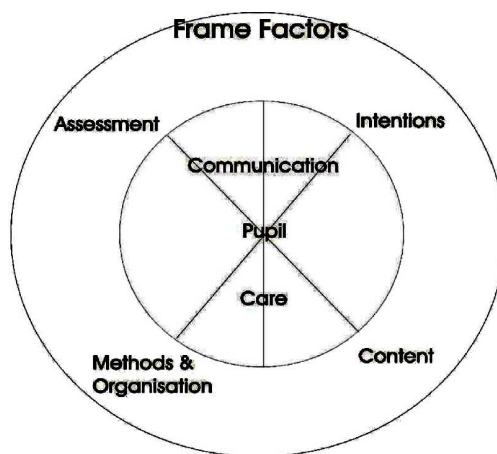


Figure 1. The Curriculum Relation Model by Berit Johnsen

**The pupil/s:** As the model I refer is pupil-centred one I will begin my elaboration with the aspect the pupil. Fundamental shift from discipline-centred educational traditions towards child-centred education is a prerequisite for inclusive education. Discipline-centred education, with its overall focus on teaching in accordance with the logic and content of the discipline, leaves some pupils, most possibly pupils with special needs, out of attention. Consequently, because of over-loaded content of schooling they cannot catch up with the others in the class. Whereas, child-centred education dedicates itself to serving each pupils individually. «Some children are robust, while others are vulnerable. But, in many ways, all children are in the same boat. The most important feature they share is their marked dependence on care giver» [4, p. 154]. So a teacher or special needs educator should focus on individuals referring to educational theories. One of these theories is cultural-historic theory in which there are essential instruments to apply into practice for inclusion. One of the vital elements of this theory is zone of proximal development (ZDP) by Vygotsky which lets the teacher get to know pupils [13]. ZDP “is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” [13, p. 86]. ZDP is especially crucial while working with individuals with special needs, because Vygotsky’s approach on learning and development lies in ZDP. Vygotsky defends the view that while making one step in learning, a child makes two steps in development.

**Communication:** Communication is an important phenomenon in which language manifests itself most effectively and language or speech in its turn is a vital mediator for learning and human development. «It is decisively important that speech not only facilitates the child's effective manipulation of objects but also controls the child's own behavior» [13, p. 26]. So communication plays an essential role in human life from early childhood to receive information through interaction (an interpersonal process) which later results in the assimilation of the language (an intrapersonal process). In an inclusive class environment communication is a means for a teacher to build friendly relations with pupils and encourage all pupils into active interrelation through communication [2]. Social interaction promotes self-confidence and willingness to deal with learning process eagerly. For example, a pupil with learning disorder may feel shy and restricted within class environment but kind relations built through communication will stimulate that pupil to ask for further help. For this purpose, Henning Rye’s principles for teacher and pupil interaction deserves consideration:

- 1) demonstrate positive feelings;
- 2) adapt to the pupil(s);

- 3) talk with the pupil(s);
- 4) give relevant praise and acknowledgement;
- 5) help the pupil(s) to focus the attention;
- 6) assist in giving meaning to the pupil's (pupils') experience;
- 7) elaborate and explain;
- 8) help the pupil(s) achieve self-discipline [9].

**Care:** Jonsen argues that care means to see and support each pupil as a unique individual with her or his personal possibilities and needs. From early ages children expect care and respect for their personality. In a class environment showing care such as smiling, appreciation, patting, eye contact with each pupil and respect them will boost mutual relations with pupils and increase their sympathy for learning and classroom activities. Care will be of huge benefit for the pupils who experience depression and anxiety and need moral support.

**Intentions:** Intentions function as a locomotive leading teaching-learning process towards development. Intention, in other words, the aim of the learning process is a point where interests of participants (teachers, learners and education policy) of learning process may collide. As an agreement between participants' learning goals and objectives in an individual curriculum is reasonably based on the three components: aims and goals stated in education acts and other official documents; individual aims, goals and objectives; assessment of the learner's knowledge, skills and learning potentials (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development discussed earlier). Another problematic issue in intention is the method how to reach it. For instance, the intention or aim to teach a pupil with learning disability reading skill cannot be attained at one step at all. Therefore this process should be divided into certain periods and be taught on regular base [8].

**Content:** Intention of teaching-learning process is achieved via content. Time period and quality of teaching considerably depends on content. As it is a teacher who is in direct contact with pupils with individual needs and interests, a teacher should be free to choose content. A teacher's freedom can only be restricted with national curricula for the sake of flexibility within it so a teacher is able to refer to various tools and teaching materials. Jonsen mentions general quality criteria for a learning activity by Bjørndal and Lieberg which are noteworthy in terms of planning individually adapted curriculum: consistency with the whole teaching program; adequacy compared to goals; variety and multiplicity; adaptive to individual pupils and group; balancing and cumulative; relevance and meaning; open to optimal integration with other learning activities; open to the pupils' choices [8].

**Teaching methods and classroom organisation:** Teaching method is a way of effective instructions and productive use of content towards success in classroom activity. A teacher should approach method and content as two legs carrying teaching-learning process ahead. Serious drawback in either will cause the process lag behind. Considering varying individual needs a teacher needs to realise various methods accordingly. Searching cultural-historical theory a teacher can find several methods meeting requirements of inclusive curriculum. The concept participatory appropriation by Barbara Rogoff ideally fits inclusive education [8]. The core of this concept implies that through an activity with peers, pupils get ready, gaining knowledge and experience, for later activities in which they perform freely. A teacher will find spiral curriculum, which suggests repetitive teaching, by Jerome Bruner [9] to be supportive tool in an inclusive class.

Ideal method is one which enables a teacher to teach pupils on individual approach. A teacher should take «learning dispositions» of each child into careful consideration [3]. Margaret Carr defines «learning dispositions» as tendencies that dispose learners in interpret, edit and respond to learning opportunities in characteristic way [13]. M. Carr also mentions Katz's view on dispositions which says that «dispositions are very different type of learning from skills and knowledge. They can be thought as habits of mind, tendencies to respond, to situations in certain ways» [13, p. 100]. Another important concept by M. Carr is «learning narrative» which implies whether a child is ready, willing and able to tackle difficulty and risk errors and whether a child is ready, willing and able to take responsibility. So the concepts «learning dispositions» and «learning narrative» play an important role in forming a teaching method which is flexible enough to take each pupil's characteristic way of learning, respond to learning opportunities and their willingness and readiness to take responsibility which in our case can be defined as tests and homework.

«Children with learning disabilities are like snowflakes; each has his or her own unique structure, combining strength and needs to form individual pattern» [9, p. 99]. Identifying interests and strength of pupils with special needs, a teacher can use these factors as mediator to deliver necessary teaching materials. To give an example, a pupil with learning disability in language development (delays in learning to speak; difficulties with naming objects and word retrieval; problematic voice modulation (loud/soft; tone); limited vocabulary and word usage should be given more chance to talk about his or her hobbies, tell stories or poems. When the pupil describes a situation or an ob-



ject a teacher will support the pupil with new words and prompts and regulate tone and intonation of speech. So while «walking» towards his aim (telling story) a teacher puts something new on his way so a pupil can grab it. Enjoying his or her favorite activity the pupil learns new skills and knowledge. Moreover, visual and audio aids must be integral part of method since using visual aids and pictures helps the child with autism to grasp concepts more easily [9]. To sum up ideas about methods, aspects by Berit Jonsen's embrace important factors to adapt methods and approaches to the plurality of different educational needs: continuous acquirement of new methods and approaches; overview of different methods and approaches; flexible application of methods and approaches; multiple uses of methods and approaches in a joint classroom setting.

A classroom is a classical surrounding for teaching and learning process. But it does not necessarily mean that it is the best effective environment, especially for the case of inclusive education. A teacher should search for a suitable and helpful classroom organization which can be organizing into big classes (two or more classes together); organizing into groups; individual teaching; in and out of the classroom or other type of organization functioning well for pupils with disabilities. Sticking to one kind of classroom organization does not work for all needs of inclusive education. For instance, dyadic (individual) teaching of a pupil with autism to understand instructions may work well. But in such case the pupil is deprived of social interaction with peers which is of paramount importance for improving social skills. So a teacher should make a professional shift between dyadic and class teaching of a pupil with disability.

**Assessment:** Curriculum in some countries considers assessment only as evaluation of knowledge mastery of pupils giving almost no place for evaluation of social skills and personal development of pupils, curriculum evaluation and other factors that may possibly have an impact on teaching-learning process. However, multiple direction assessment conducted professionally allows a teacher to get a good idea about pupils' improvement level, quality of teaching method and effectiveness of the curriculum. Besides, in inclusive education it is extremely important for a teacher to know a pupil with disability in terms of interests, needs, strength and weakness and the zone of proximal development, in other words, real and potential mastery. As an effective method of individual assessment a teacher may refer to the following general examples of methods and approaches: interviews and conversations; ques-

tionnaires; pupil's self evaluation; assessment as part of mediating; achievement tests; specific mastery or ability tests.

**Frame factors:** As an institution the school depends upon and operates within a framework consisting of several frame factors, such as legislation, economic and human resources and a number of physical, social and cultural aspects. In some cultures frame factor can be a real challenge for inclusive education. First of all, legislation in many developing countries does not envisage inclusive education. Furthermore, politicians and decision makers of some countries (especially in post-soviet countries) consider inclusive education a barrier for the education of others. Instead, these countries organise segregated form of special needs education such as special schools or institutionalised education centres for children with disabilities refusing all kinds of versions of inclusion.

Financial issue, accessibility of school buildings, deficiency in assistive technology and lack of professional special needs educators and assistants are huge obstacles for the education of persons with disabilities, especially for inclusive education. Unfortunately, stereotypes and stigma of disability in some cultures appear as undesirable factors against inclusive education. Given all these realities, teachers/special needs educators encounter much bigger challenges in inclusive education. Countries which experience above-mentioned problems and hesitate about doubtful quality of inclusion, may consider the Enrichment Perspective [8]. Enrichment Perspective is meant as a departure form focusing on weaknesses to resources, as a reputable approach to special needs education. According to the Enrichment Perspective, a community, a school, and a society, which adapts and is responsive to the needs and distinctive features of people with different needs and abilities (e.g., disabilities) enriches everyone, pupils and educators alike. This approach stands successfully against traditional approach which states that children with disabilities in a class are distraction for both teacher and other children. Quite contrary to this, a teacher who tries to meet different needs and abilities in a class improves his/her professional qualifications and skills and classroom activities specifically organized for children with disabilities will also work for advantage of other children.

### **Planning a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum**

Taking all the above-mentioned principles into consideration, a map of individually adapted curriculum is described below (figure 2). The curriculum

is meant for a pupil with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who is characterized by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, repetitive behaviors and intellectual disability. Intention is to teach the pupil grammar rules and some vocabulary which are indicated in class curriculum. Besides, the pupil will improve social skills, theory of mind which implies the ability to understand the thinking and feelings of other people, and predicting and shaping the behavior of others. Moreover, the pupil will improve the information processing model, in other words, the thinking skills like decision making, problem solving, executive function, reasoning and evaluation.

Content includes classic tools like books, a board and others. Most importantly, content includes pictures, colored flash cards, and relevant computer programs. «Neihart (2000) suggests frequent use of diagrams, visualization, and pictograms in the lessons provided to children with Asperger's syndrome or to high-functioning children with autism, as they think best in concrete and literal pictures» [9, p. 152].

As children with ASD have hypersensitivity to noises, I choose a seat away from the window and door to avoid possible sudden troubling noises. Children with ASD are sensitive to unorganized environment and unpredicted classroom. So I realize «structured teaching» giving the child the schedule of class activities and always seat him in the same place for the sake of consistent physical environment. While explaining teaching material I make substantial use of colored pictures and also organize short activities involving the child with ASD himself/herself for clear understanding. In parallel, the activities involve situations to improve the child's social skills, theory of mind and improve the information processing model.

When it comes to assessment, firstly, a teacher needs to assess «zone of proximal development» of the child with ASD to find out his/her real and potential learning. Later to assess level of the mastery I use illustrated tests and exercises, so he/she does not get bored with them and keeps the attention for a longer period. Information by classmates is important to assess the child's in and out of class interactions with peers. All these factors are used to assess adapted curriculum and its relation the class curriculum.

Criteria for suitable place for the pupil with ASD also hold the fact that the pupil can see and hear all in the classroom. I also pay special attention to the pupil's involvement in class and group discussions. Furthermore, I refer to Henning Rye's 8 principles for teacher and pupil interaction (mentioned above) for care and communication while working with the pupil with ASD [9].

Individually adapted curriculum for a pupil with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)		Course: English as second language
<b>January</b>		
<b>Frame Factors</b>	<b>The pupil</b>	Nick is diagnosed to have ASD which is characterised by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, repetitive behaviors and intellectual disability.
	<b>Intention</b>	Nick will learn “present simple tense” and “present simple continuous tense” and new vocabulary and be able to use this grammar rules and vocabulary in his speech fluently
	<b>Content</b>	Nick will improve his social skills, theory of mind and improve the information processing model (thinking skills) through activities. Books, a board, pictures, coloured flash cards, relevant computer programs.
	<b>Methods and organisation</b>	Considering his hypersensitivity to noises, choose a suitable place for Nick, consistent environment, “structured teaching”, divide structure and use of grammar rule and teach them with instructions simple instructions step by step in different days, explaining lesson with pictures, class and individual teaching, a short sketch demonstrating present tense, group work, pair work.
	<b>Assessment</b>	Assess “zone of proximal development”, illustrated tests to assess mastery of content, theory of mind and thinking skills, observations and interview with other students about Nick’s social skills, based on this information assess curriculum and its relation to the class curriculum.
	<b>Communication</b>	Suitable place for Nick so he sees and hears all in class, communication and eye contact with Nick, involve him in class and group discussions, instruct fellow pupils to interact and share with Nick out of class activities and try to adjust their attitudes to his needs.
	<b>Care</b>	Encourage, praise, demonstrate positive feelings, respect and affection, listen carefully when Nick speaks.

Figure 2. A sample of an individually adapted curriculum based on the Curriculum Relation Model

The Curriculum Relation Model is a professionally sophisticated model most aspects (the pupil/s, assessment, educational intentions, educational content, and methods & classroom organisation) of which are inspired by categories rooted back to Plato and ancient Greek traditions. An extension of the model with the aspects communication and care makes it ideal tool for a teacher/special needs educator to plan meaningful and individually adapted curriculum with a full relation to class curriculum.

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