

**THE CREATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SPACE
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The issue of creating an inclusive educational space in higher education institutions in the first half of the twenty-first century is relevant due to the global trend of involving everyone in the education process, regardless of social status and personal physical challenges. This issue has become especially acute in Ukraine due to the forced martial law, which only increases the number of people with special educational needs who need support and attention from society. The purpose of the paper is to study and analyze the creation of an inclusive educational space in higher education institutions that provides a barrier-free architectural environment, a favorable psychological microclimate, the development of inclusive competence of teachers, etc. The article uses theoretical methods of analysis, synthesis and generalization of the practical experience of a particular higher education institution, as well as the method of observing the activities of its structural units in creating an inclusive educational space. The authors note that a specific component of an inclusive educational space is adaptation. It involves the adaptation of students with special educational needs to new conditions, integration into groups, activities, adoption of norms, rules, values of higher education, etc. The article analyzes the inclusive educational space of Kharkiv Hryhoriy Skovoroda National Pedagogical University, which consists of the following structural units: the Educational and Methodological Inclusive Center, the Department of Special Education, and the Inclusive Art Hub, which facilitates the adaptation of students with special educational needs to the conditions of studying at a higher education institution. Ukraine has many experienced scientists in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, and art history who are engaged in scientific and methodological support for the development of an inclusive society and an inclusive educational environment. However, their readiness to work with students with special educational needs does not meet the realities of today. The development of an inclusive culture among teachers and the creation of an appropriate inclusive space at the university should help reduce psychological barriers and develop the skills of teachers' methodological and practical work with students with special educational needs. The organization of such creative spaces is a good practice that should be adopted and implemented in educational and public spaces across the country and abroad.

Keywords: higher education institution; educational space; student; inclusion; inclusive culture.

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АНАЛІЗ ДОСВІДУ СТВОРЕННЯ ІНКЛЮЗИВНОГО ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОСТОРУ В ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ УКРАЇНИ

У статті проаналізовано інклюзивний освітній простір Харківського національного педагогічного університету імені Г.С. Сковороди, який складається з таких структурних підрозділів: навчально-методичний інклюзивний центр, кафедра спеціальної освіти, інклюзивний арт-хаб, який сприяє адаптації студентів з особливими освітніми потребами до умов навчання у закладі вищої освіти.

Розвиток інклюзивної культури у викладачів та створення відповідного інклюзивного простору в університеті має сприяти зниженню психологічних бар'єрів і розвитку навичок методичної та практичної роботи викладачів зі студентами з особливими освітніми потребами. Організація таких креативних просторів є гарною практикою, яку варто переймати та впроваджувати в освітніх та громадських просторах по всій країні і за її межами.

Ключові слова: заклад вищої освіти; освітній простір; студент; інклюзія; інклюзивна культура.

Introduction. The components of an inclusive educational space, according to M. Tchaikovsky are as follows: correction; barrier-free; availability of educational resources; individualization and variability of inclusive educational space [11].

The concept of inclusive space came into scientific circulation at the end of the XX century and is a system that interacts with social space and responds dynamically to modern demands of society. The development of professional and personal qualities of the applicant with special educational needs occurs within this clearly structured system.

The society of the XXI century has reached such a level of social development that it cannot afford to ignore the needs of any young person. Inclusion has a significant impact on policy, research, and practical work and has many meanings, ranging from simply enrolling students with special educational needs in regular higher education institutions to transforming the philosophy, values, and practical approaches of education systems. The educational community of the world needs inclusion as a means of achieving social justice in the interests of students with special educational needs. The creation of an inclusive educational space in the education system, in particular in the higher education system of Ukraine, is a key factor influencing the intensive reform of traditional higher education, enabling access to quality education for people with special educational needs. In particular, the Decree of the President of Ukraine states that National Educational Institutions of Ukraine must ensure the accessibility of buildings, premises and adjacent territory for persons with special educational needs and other low-mobility groups. The increase in the actual number of young people with special educational needs and the intensity of the integration of such young people into the general education space requires

the development of an inclusive educational environment in the higher education system of Ukraine. It will ensure the continuity of education, create opportunities for creative self-realization of young people with special educational needs.

Most young people with physical disabilities are talented, but they do not have the physical or material ability to realize their creative ideas. Of course, young people with special educational needs should not be left without proper attention. After all, they are deprived of the opportunity to receive education alongside their peers with normal development, they are denied access to creative studios. Therefore one of the most important phenomena in modern education is the movement for developing inclusive spaces and society. Creating a comfortable inclusive educational space in higher education institutions is important for the successful education and socialization not only of students with mental and physical disabilities, but also other participants of the educational process. However, despite the urgency of the outlined problem, its solution and implementation are rather slow and uncertain.

The analysis of modern scientific research proves that the study of inclusive education attracts the attention of many both domestic and foreign scientists. T. Kachalova [6] considered the need to include tutoring for students with special needs as an area of inclusive culture in higher education. N. Shemigon [6] analyzed and identified the components of the adapted inclusive space that contributes to the adaptation of students with special educational needs in higher education institutions. The researcher N. Ashytko studied the question inclusive educational space in philosophical discourse [1].

The issues of preparing a future teacher to work in inclusive education, the readiness development of teachers, educators to work with children with special

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educational needs are covered in the scientific works of Ukrainian researchers T. Sobchenko *et al.* [9; 10], Yu. Boichuk *et al.* [5], E. Zabelina *et al.* [13], O. Bashkir *et al.* [2; 3]. The issues of teacher training during a pandemic were investigated by O. Bashkir *et al.* [2; 3]. These studies covered current issues devoted to create a flexible educational environment, the adaptation of students with different types of inclusion to the curricula of higher education institutions. Authors R. Tichá *et al.* [12] paid attention to the issues of creating an inclusive environment in educational institutions. Their study also highlighted the learning strategies to support and improve the social and psychological inclusion of applicants, etc. However, the problem of inclusive space development as a component of the inclusive culture of a higher education institution does not have a deep theoretical and practical justification. The current study highlights the experience of inclusive space creation in higher education institutions of Ukraine on the example of H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University.

Results. The successful experience of H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University is important in the context of inclusive educational space organization. This university has ancient tradition of training teachers in various fields, including future teachers for children with special educational needs. After graduation, teachers work in specialized educational institutions of various types for children who need correction of physical or mental development. However, the university is also open to students and teachers with special educational problems. During 2021–2022 academic year, the university has 72 students with various types of nosology (vision, hearing, musculoskeletal system, cerebral palsy). Note that among the academic staff there are also people with special educational needs. Teachers and university administration are constantly working to find new methods for socializing young people with disabilities, improving existing inclusive technologies to make students and teachers feel free and comfortable within the university.

The educational institution faced the following problems:

- lack of communication between students with different types of nosology;
- lack of mentor position for inclusive students;
- inexperience of teachers in working with students with special educational needs;
- psychological unreadiness of students to interact in a new educational space;
- insufficient development of communication skills in students with inclusion;
- lack of informal communication between students and teachers, etc.

The abovementioned problems required an urgent solution and the creation of a proper inclusive educa-

tional environment. In this regard, in 2017, the university established an Inclusive Educational and Methodological Center. According to the “Regulations on the support of students with special educational needs at H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University”, the aim of this Center is to create a system of complex support of training and educational-rehabilitation conditions directed on the maintenance of integral development, creative self-realization of students with special educational needs. Specialists of this center are correctional and social teachers, valeologists, psychologists, physicians, who develop an individual training and rehabilitation program for students with special educational needs on the basis of a differentiated approach in accordance with their available nosologies based on the selection of optimal forms, methods and teaching aids and individual correctional and rehabilitation activities that provide comprehensive support for such students and facilitate the gradual adaptation to the educational process at the university. Also, the Educational and Methodical Inclusive Center organizes and conducts consultations for the staff of deans’ offices, heads of departments, mentors, teachers on qualified planning, organization and monitoring of educational and rehabilitation work with students with special educational needs.

A separate structural unit of the inclusive space of the university is the Department of Special Pedagogy at the Faculty of Natural, Special and Health Education. The department trains specialists of higher education of the I and II degrees in major 016 Special education. The students solve the problems of organizational, correctional, developmental, rehabilitation processes aimed at eliminating deficiencies in child development, prevention of difficulties in its upbringing and education. Educational subjects provided by the Department, are a component of professional training of teachers-defectologists, teachers-speech therapists, teachers-rehabilitation therapists. The department employs teachers who have significant experience in both research and practical work with children and adolescents with speech disorders, sensory and intellectual disabilities. Teachers of the department are active participants in conferences, seminars on speech therapy, deaf pedagogy, typhlopedagogy, oligophrenic pedagogy, consultants of special and inclusive educational institutions.

The active practical activity of the teaching staff of the university and the need to create a special inclusive space for students with disabilities stimulated the search for possible ways to organize a special inclusive space. As a result, the teachers developed the idea and found sponsors to implement it. At the beginning of 2021 the project team of the university applied for a grant to the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF), a state institution established in 2017 to promote the development of national culture and art in Ukraine,

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providing favorable conditions for developing intellectual and spiritual potential of the individual and society, wide access to the national cultural heritage, support cultural diversity and integration of Ukrainian culture into the world cultural space. On a competitive basis, the project team received funds from UCF to create a design and open a unique art space “Inclusive Art-Hub” for students and teachers with special educational needs. The organization of the project is designed to draw public attention to the problems of people with disabilities, to form respect for their rights and needs, to promote inclusion as a basic value for social development. The innovative project solves the problem of socialization the students with disabilities through art and joint creative activities. A separate room is divided into zones of creativity, coworking, psychological relief and handmade activities. The areas are equipped with convenient places for creative work of students with disabilities in various art areas (pottery, monotype, music, painting, handicrafts, sand animation etc.) and special tools and equipment (scissors with combined handles, devices for capturing objects for students with cerebral palsy, magnifying glasses with tweezers for the visually impaired persons, special sewing needles, su jock balls, books in Braille, etc.).

The project is implemented in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement for four months (August-December) 2021. Within the framework of the project implementation, not only students of H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, but also students of other educational institutions of Kharkiv, in particular, children with special educational needs of Kharkiv secondary school I-III degrees № 38 Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region, Kharkiv special school № 8 of Kharkiv regional council, Municipal institution V.G. Korolenko Kharkiv special school of the Kharkiv regional council. Up to 20 people can work in the hub simultaneously, accompanied by highly qualified specialists (professional artists, musicians, handicrafts specialists) and a sign language interpreter. After a month of the hub’s activity, an exhibition of creative works of its participants was organized within the project (in November). The inclusive hub will operate continuously, which will promote socialization and creative self-realization of students with different types of nosology.

The uniqueness of the Art-Hub is also performed in its operation structure. Representatives of the Alumni Association, the Council of Young Scientists and the Student Scientific Society of H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University are involved as volunteers in the hub work. It forms important soft skills in students, who contribute to their professional flexibility and adaptability in different social groups.

It is also worth noting that the organization of the project “Inclusive Art-Hub” helped to solve existing

problems in the culture of inclusive education:

- leveling existing barriers that prevent students with disabilities from accessing higher education;
- development of didactic and methodical recommendations for inclusive and master classes on monotype, handicrafts, music, sand animation.

Discussion. The issue of an inclusive educational space creation in higher education institutions is a current educational trend around the world. The problems of inclusive education are raised by the Icelandic researcher K. Björnsdóttir [4]. The study describes the features of adaptation of the general curriculum and learning outcomes of students with special educational needs; it is presented the “Vocational Diploma Program” as a variant of academic and social support of students.

The study of Spanish researchers R. Lopez-Gavira *et al.* [7] is devoted to the creation of conditions in the institution of higher education for effective learning of students with inclusion. The authors describe the activities of universities to support such students to improve their quality and technology to facilitate access to learning. Author N. Shemigon [8] considers the adaptation a specific component of an inclusive educational space, which provides an adaptation of applicants with special educational needs to new conditions, integration into student groups, active learning of the life experience, the adoption of norms, rules, values of higher education. Researcher T. Kachalova [6] revealed the issue of inclusive culture development of higher education, which is a unique microclimate and trusting atmosphere that helps avoid contradictions, conflict situations. The author proved that higher education institutions can acquire the status of inclusive institution subject to fulfillment of the following requirements:

- providing a barrier-free architectural environment;
- creating a favorable psychological microclimate;
- an inclusive competence development in university teachers.

The authors also share the opinion of T. Kachalova [6] that the creation of an inclusive educational environment in higher educational institution will contribute to an inclusive culture development of all participants of the educational process of higher education. Author T. Sobchenko determined [9] the process of creating an inclusive educational space of an educational institution, the attention should be paid to the training of future teachers to organize the learning process of children with special educational needs, which will contribute to inclusive competence development. The abovementioned research of the authors does not refer to the structural units of higher education institutions, which, in cooperation, create conditions for adaptation and training of students with different types of inclusion. The effective education of

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such students is facilitated not only by high-quality training and professionalism of teaching, but also through the organizing leisure and education of students with special educational needs using art, co-creation and communication.

Conclusions. Thus, the creation of an inclusive educational space at H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (organization of the Inclusive Educational and Methodological Center, Department of Special Pedagogy, Inclusive Art Hub) will promote the adaptation of young people with special educational needs to the conditions of higher education, their motivation to study, as well as reducing psychological barriers and developing methodological and practical work of teachers with students with special educational needs. At the state level, the organization of such creative spaces is a good practice that should be adopted and implemented in educational and public spaces of different regions of the country, which are interested in “special” education and the indifferent fate of young people with special educational needs.

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“Людина вирушила на зустріч з іншими світами, іншими цивілізаціями, не пізнавши до кінця закамарків, глухих кутів, глибоких колодязів, міцно забарикадованих дверей власної душі”.

Станіслав Лем
польський письменник-фантаст

