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## **GIFT/PROMOTION AS A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION FOR DISABLED: THE EXAMPLE OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 7-10 YEARS**

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**Abstract.** The essay is devoted to the study of the incentives formation and implementation of a well-built incentives system problem for visually impaired students for their successful psychological adaptation. The essay describes the results of the application of the incentive / gift system in the process of social adaptation of visually impaired students (aged 7-10 years) in Russian schools. The research community included 30 visually impaired students from Russian schools. Schoolchildren were found to have visual impairments such as myopia, strabismus, color blindness, and difficulty focusing eye movements. The essay indicates the high importance of the school team as a factor in the further development of mental functions and intact analyzers of visually impaired students. The essay emphasizes the special role of an incentive, namely an encouragement or a gift. Encouragement or a gift can activate the activity of a visually impaired student in the school team, form his motivation to serve the team, in which he is an integral part and is perceived by ordinary peers as one of the key irreplaceable links capable of solving unique important tasks in this team. The results of the research presented in the essay show that with the proper use of the system of rewards and gifts, many visually impaired students become the most relaxed and active. They have a dynamics that characterizes the stages of inclusion in activities, which shows the overcoming of the psychological crisis and the achievement of psychological comfort in social communication. This is very important for the

development of the internal personal resources of visually impaired students and their successful self-realization.

**Keywords:** visually impaired students, encouragement / gift, incentive system, psychological adaptation, involvement in activities, psychological comfort in the team.

The adaptation of students with visual impairments is due to the need to use a variety of methods of educational influence on the personality. These methods are most effective when applied in the school team, which is a huge force of educational influence [12; 14].

The special education sphere presupposes special attention to the use of methods of educating students with visual impairments, since, in addition to methodological means in this case, methods of education are also factors in successfully overcoming physical and psychological barriers in the health and visually impaired students development [2; 9].

It is known that the difficulties of visually impaired students' social adaptation are associated not only with physical abnormalities in their

health, but also with the problems of integrating such students into social processes: study, work, sporting events, etc. In this regard, visually impaired teachers seem to drop out of the social life of the school collective, which prevents further normal development and successful social adaptation. This predetermines the special organization of the collective life as a factor in the further development of the visually impaired student higher mental functions, the use of the intact analyzers potential, and, if possible, the restoration of visual functions [1; 4; 5; 10].

The school collective as a factor in the further development of mental functions in the context of the teacher's guidance enables the teacher to "program" the development of the personality and control the process during which the positive social

experience of the students is formed and the personal qualities are improved [6; 8].

It should be noted that a visually impaired student, just like his ordinary peers, is a social subject and is able to effectively communicate with participants in the educational process, as well as to successfully manifest himself in various types of activities in different ways. For this, the visually impaired student needs an incentive. The stimulus for individual development allows not only to psychologically favorably influence the adaptation process of such a child, but also to act as the most important factor in individual development in a team and contribute to the development of the team as a whole [11].

The visually impaired student's activity in the school team does not arise spontaneously. The manifestation of such activity requires a whole system of pedagogical influences, among which

encouragement plays a conceptual role.

An encouragement / gift can not only activate the visually impaired student's activity in the school team, but also form his motivation to serve the team, in which he – the visually impaired student – is an integral part and is perceived by ordinary peers as one of the key irreplaceable links capable of solving unique important tasks in this the team [3].

Such support of the team of an initially insecure, visually impaired student in those matters and interests that correspond to the abilities of this student, in advance forms an attitude of support and assistance in the event of errors, loss of self-esteem, development of a stressful state due to possible failures and other psychologically unfavorable situations.

When implementing rewarding influences in such situations, psychological factors that hinder the successful development and visually impaired student adaptation are

eliminated, and his mental state is strengthened, the stability of which depends on the experiences of the judgmental opinion of others in relation to errors possible due to visual impairment.

V.S. Merlin, B.I. Kovalenko, V.S. Sverlov and others drew attention to difficulties of this nature, correlating the errors that arise with insufficient independence, which is not easy for visually impaired students to fully demonstrate [7; 13].

And, conversely, the manifestation of attention from others, inclusion in collective games, integration into general activities, etc. act as a kind of reward that stimulates the independent activity of visually impaired schoolchildren in various activities.

We consider it necessary to note that an encouragement or a gift, considered as a special form that regulates the level of visually impaired students' psychological adaptation, should be used in educational activities from the

standpoint of actualizing internal personal resources in interaction with the outside world, with other people, with oneself. This is the essence of successful social and educational integration of students with visual impairments.

The study of persons with disabilities' persons' integration various issues has fundamental theoretical and methodological foundations. Foreign scientific studies of this problem are associated with such scientists as Aysherwood M., Abbring I., Meijer C., Berrigan C., Taylor D., Bishop V., Booth T., Potts P., Haan A., Hegarty S., Pocklington K., Lucas D., Scheel K., Tillman MH, Williams C., Winser MA and others (Isherwood, 1991; Abbring, Meijer, 1994; Berrigan, Taylor, 1997; Bishop, 1986; Booth, Potts, 1983; Haan, 1998; Hegarty, Pocklington, Lucas, 1981; Scheel, 1986; Tillman, Williams, 1968; Winser, 1993).

Domestic science has enriched the experience of studying the problem with the research of N. V.

Ageeva, O. A. Gerasimenko, R. P. Diemenshtein, V. Gudonis, T. V. Egorova, D. V. Zaitsev, A. M. Zotova, V. Kantor. Z., Malofeev N.N., Khvorostyanova N.I., Shipitsyna L.M., Ellansky Yu.G., Peshkov S.P., Yarskaya V.N., Yarskaya-Smirnova E.R., etc. (Ageeva, 2006; Gerasimenko, Dimenstein, 2001; Gudonis, 1993; Egorova, 2002; Zaitsev, 2003; Zotova, 1997; Kantor, 2005; Malofeev, 1997; Khvorostyanova, 1999; Shipitsyna, 2002; Ellansky, Peshkov, 1995; Yarskaya, 1997; Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2002).

However, despite a significant amount of research, the problem of successful integration, its indicators and methods of psychological adaptation is still relevant.

It is known that how successful the psychological adaptation of a student will be at the initial stage of training, the more successful his further personal self-realization will be. This determined the *purpose* of the study, which is to find

mechanisms (in particular, rewards as incentives for social adaptation) of a successful influence on the psychological adaptation of students with visual impairments.

To achieve this purpose, the following *tasks* were formulated:

1. To analyze the features of social and psychological adaptation of visually impaired students in educational institutions.
2. To identify the aspects of adaptation and their relationship with the need for the approval of visually impaired students of primary school age.
3. To reveal the essence of the system of stimulating visually impaired students in activities.
4. To identify the dynamics of the involvement of visually impaired students in collective and individual activities based on the implementation of the

incentive system (gifts / rewards).

The *working hypothesis* of the study is to substantiate the effectiveness of the proposed system of stimulating visually impaired students in their psychological adaptation and implementation in activities.

The presented research *methodological basis* is reflected in the basic way in the system approach, which forms the fundamental representation of integrative knowledge and includes:

- the system-integral approach, which provided the formation of our understanding of the systemic properties and modes of visually impaired student existence in society;

- a systemic evolutionary approach, which made it possible to study the processes of visually impaired student adaptation formation who integrates into the educational environment;

- a system-integrated approach, which made it possible to take into account the diverse aspects of the visually impaired student needs formation of the needs and synthesize additional opportunities for his successful psychological adaptation.

The use of this approach helped us to form a conceptual understanding of the peculiarities of using the incentive system in the process of psychological adaptation of visually impaired students.

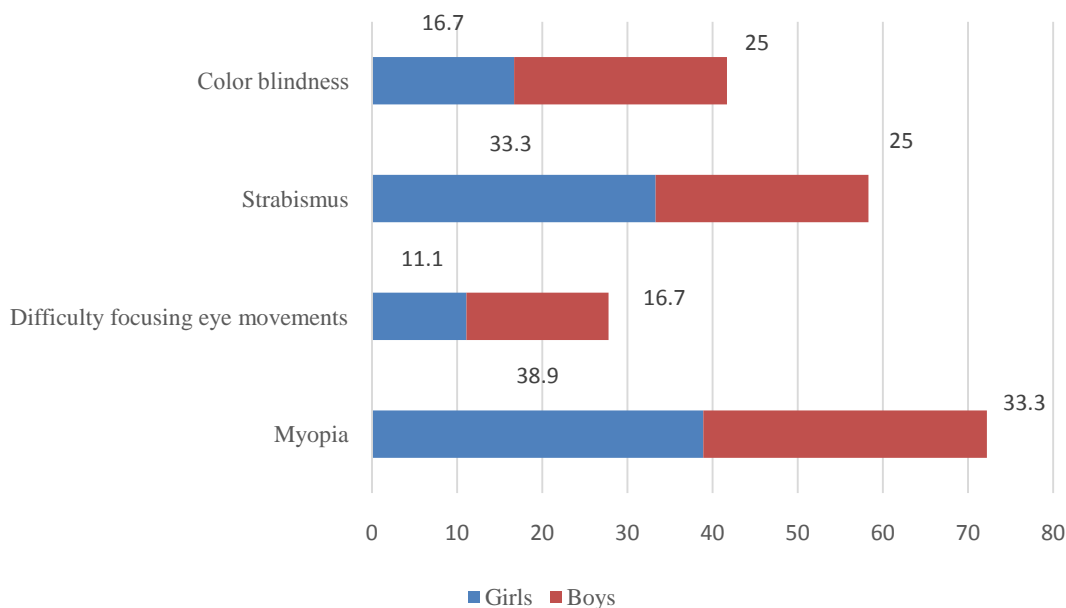
The study involved 30 visually impaired students (aged 7-10 years; girls, n = 18 and boys, n = 12) from Russian schools with the following visual impairments: myopia (36,7%; n = 11), strabismus (30,0%; n = 9), color blindness (20 , 0%; n = 6), irregularities in focusing eye movements (13,3%; n = 4), As in Figure (1).

In the research course, we noted that this category of children is able to normally adapt to the social environment of ordinary peers, since

the loss and impairment of their visual functions is not critical, that is, these schoolchildren are quite well oriented in the surrounding space. But, nevertheless, in the social environment they are distinguished by the fact that they are insecure, consider themselves incapable of being fully in demand in society, etc.

In the observation course, analyzing the aspects of adaptation of visually impaired students, it was noted that among students suffering from myopia, 81, 2% are adapted to the subject world. Among schoolchildren with eye movement focusing disorders, this aspect of adaptation is quite pronounced in 75,0% of students.

**Visually impaired students, %**

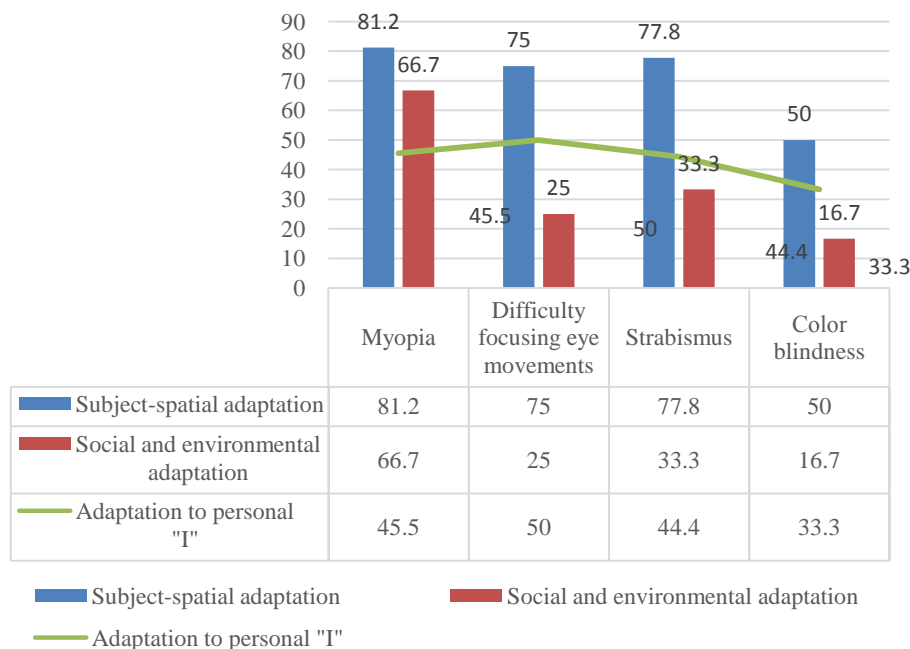


**Figure (1).**Distribution of students by visual impairment's types,%

Among schoolchildren with strabismus, 77, 8% are adapted to the objective world, and among students

with color blindness – 50, 0%, As in Figure (2).

### Characteristics of visually impaired students in various aspects of adaptation, %



**Figure (2).** Distribution of visually impaired students by adaptation type,%

This suggests that the studied visually impaired schoolchildren are quite mobile, have a pronounced operational-activity characteristic, which allows them to form skills and abilities for independent life and activity.

The adaptation indicators to the social environment of this student group demonstrate their connection with the environment/society, show involvement in collective life and the ability for collective activity.

Adaptation to one's own personal "I" shows the experience associated with the realization of physical inadequacy. This suggests that in order to improve this indicator, support is needed to activate the internal self-regulation of the such students' personality.

Investigating the visually impaired students' adaptation aspects, we found that these students have a higher need for approval from others, including peers and adults, i.e. teachers. They need support,



stimulation and encouragement in order to be most useful to the team, in demand and needed.

Visually impaired students of primary school age attach particular importance to the value judgments that adults and peers make about them. A visually impaired student, as a rule, just like an ordinary child, does not want to wait for such an assessment, but wants to actively seek it on his own, than he seeks to get praise or tries to deserve it.

This suggests that the primary school age period is characterized by a favorable stage for the formation of success, as well as a combination of a number of other properties that in the future will ensure the success of visually impaired student various activities types.

The formation of an achievement needs system in a given age period depends on a number of circumstances. To find out these circumstances means to make successful and effective psychological and pedagogical activity and support

of the educational process of schoolchildren with visual impairments.

For this category of students, the structural foundations of the personality begin to be laid. This is manifested primarily in the formation of a stable structure of motives, the design of new social needs. Among such needs are the following: the need for respect and recognition from an adult; the desire to perform so-called “adult” activities that a visually impaired student considers important from the standpoint of assessing adults; the need to be recognized as peers, etc.

In connection with the formation of socially significant visually impaired schoolchildren needs, a keen interest in collective forms of joint activity appears. However, against the background of the desired collectivism, schoolchildren with visual impairments of a given age develop a need to be the first, best, noticed, etc. in a game or any other form of

collective activity. On this basis, competition games with gifts and rewards are distinguished into a special area of psychological and pedagogical support. In such games for visually impaired schoolchildren, the most attractive moment becomes success or victory, a prize, a gift, etc., in connection with which it is assumed that it is in such game situations and games that the need for achievement begins to form and subsequently the motivation for success is fixed.

It should also be noted that from this need and its expression in activities, the need to organize their activities and position their own behavior in accordance with the established norms and rules is also formed. A completely new type of motivation for the visually impaired student appears – the basis of voluntary behavior, which is conditioned by the fact that the student begins to assimilate the system of social values, moral norms

and primary micro society social behavior characteristic rules.

Also, visually impaired schoolchildren of primary preschool age begin to become more internally aware of themselves, and therefore become less understandable for the people around them. The reason for this, as a rule, is the distinction in the consciousness of the student of his external and internal life. The student develops a need to correlate his activity and behavior with the experiences that are relevant to him at the moment. This gives the child a sense of integrity, in connection with which he becomes aware of himself, the attitude of others around him and his attitude towards them, as well as awareness of his experience and results of activity.

For visually impaired students, the need for approval is very relevant. It is associated with the projection of the adults value judgments on the manifestation of their social “I-image” and social position. A child with visual impairments begins to realize

what place he occupies in the life of society. If any needs do not find their realization within the framework of their real “I-image”, they have an unconscious manifestation of resistance, expressed in isolation, depression, inaction, sad thoughts, etc.

The need for approval assessment was studied based on the D. Crown and D. Marlowe methodology, adapted in the author's processing by the psychological laboratory PsyLab for younger schoolchildren with visual impairments. This technique allowed us to determine the level of need for approval from the people around them, namely peers and teachers.

The presented of psychological and pedagogical sciences fields believe that the higher the child's need for approval, the more their behavioral reactions correspond to the approved pattern. It is also generally accepted that such individuals are more conformable, susceptible to various social influences, and usually

do not mind different requests and tasks. However, with regard to visually impaired schoolchildren, it should be noted that their need for approval is associated with self-identification of the so-called “normal” behavior, the formation of values of the type “to be useful”, “to be recognized and necessary”, “to be a real helper”, etc.

The need for approval research results showed that the need for approval among students with visual impairments was 11, 91 points. In 25, 8% of girls of this age, the need for approval was average, in 41, 9% – above average, and in 32, 3% – high. Boys had a high level of need for approval – 54, 2%. This suggests that working with such children requires a well-built incentive system, As in Table (1).

### **Table (1).**

Indicators of visually impaired students in the need for encouragement, approval, recognition, points, mean value (M), standard deviation ( $\sigma$ )

Students	The level of need for encouragement, approval, gift			
	High	Above Average	Average	$M \pm \sigma$
Girls	12,71	11,25	10,24	$11,4 \pm 0,873$
Boys	12,35	11,91	10,82	$11,693 \pm 0,582$
Regardless of gender	12,53	11,58	10,53	$11,547 \pm 0,678$

In the research course, the system of incentives for successful social adaptation of visually impaired students consisted of the following types of rewards and gifts:

-verbal praise; it is the most accessible and effective form for successful psychological adaptation; you can use the words “Well done!”, “Right!”, “Perfectly!”, etc.

-physical expressions of praise, such as shaking hands, etc .; it is a tactile stimulus, which is accompanied by the emergence of emotional comfort for the visually impaired student and activates his internal resources;

-subject reinforcement (small gift, surprise); these are joint game and competitive team actions, contests using small gifts;

-awards (souvenir, prize); this is encouragement at the end of a lesson, game, lesson;

-feeding; used as a stimulus to reinforce the performed action, the achieved result.

In the process of visually impaired students achieving successful social and psychological adaptation, we used the “reactive chain” technique. This technique was characterized by the organization of various joint short-term tasks for ordinary students and students with visual impairments, after which the various stimuli described above were used. The promotion was varied and continuous.

As a result of such activities, many visually impaired students have become the most relaxed and active. They showed dynamics characterizing

the stages of inclusion in activities, which showed overcoming the psychological crisis and reaching the psychological comfort of social communication, As in Figure (3).

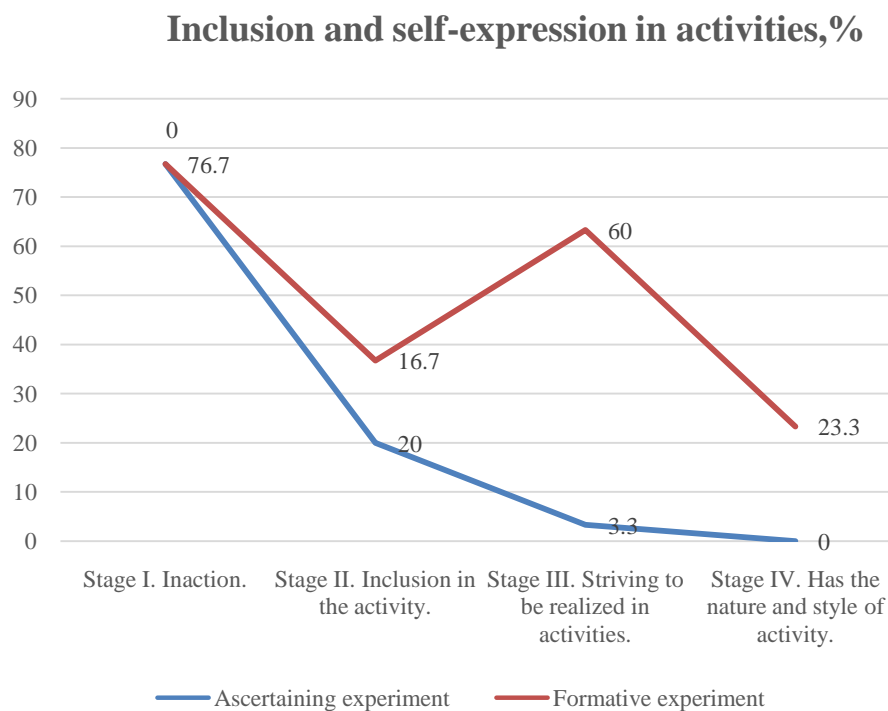
So, at the formative stage of the experiment, no inactive, visually impaired students were recorded. The number of students with visual impairments periodically involved in activities (including collective ones) was 16, 7%.

The number of visually impaired schoolchildren increased by 56, 7%, who began to be characterized not only by the desire to participate in activities, but also to show the desire to self-actualize in it,

to feel the joy of communication, to achieve success, etc.

The number of visually impaired schoolchildren has increased by 23, 3%, who have formed their own style and character in joint and individual activities, and began to show their uniqueness.

Thus, for successful visually impaired schoolchildren social and psychological adaptation, it is important not only to master self-service skills, but also to establish friendly social ties. These social connections need to be reinforced with a variety of rewards to meet the need for the approval of visually impaired students.



**Figure (3).** Dynamics and characteristics of the visually impaired students involvement in activities, %

At this age stage, the need for approval and its satisfaction in the form of encouragement, gift, support mediate, mutually determine and complement each other, but the former are already beginning to be regulated by a stable manifestation of volitional efforts to ensure achievements. This suggests that at this age stage, the visually impaired student is already aware of himself as a subject in the system of relations

such as “man-man”, “man-society”, “man-environment”.

And, if the need of a schoolchild with visual impairments in the transition to a new, more “adult” social position and new, more “adult” activity is satisfied, then this child has a feeling of psychological comfort, which indicates successful psychological adaptation.

With the awareness of visually impaired students their social position and their place among the people around them, a striving for a new,

more pronounced social role corresponding to their needs comes. It is precisely during this period that a stable self-esteem is formed in younger schoolchildren with visual impairments, in connection with which their activity begins to be conditioned by the motivation for success and is expressed in the strategy of developing the need for achieving success, personal self-realization.

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