

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAMS IN THE USA

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Summary

Based on the analysis of materials it was revealed that during a significant period of time in the United States the main goal of children with limited capabilities was to gain access to proper general education. Due to the active movement of civil rights for all citizens of the United States the U.S. government adopted a number of legislative acts that could access students with special educational needs to general education. A large number of students who needed special educational conditions provoked a deep rethinking of the training process that could professionally provide necessary training. By analyzing, it was revealed that the training of a teacher of special education involves producing information about the development of students with special educational needs and methods of their correction during learning and education. For this reason, all special education training programs are generally included following subjects relating to applied behavior analysis, mental disorder practice, auxiliary technologies, ways to eliminate language learning, educating pupils with autism or deep mental disorders, typical and atypical early child development, etc. However, it was revealed that every University has certain variations on initial requirements for the introduction, methods of teaching, training duration, internship passage, obtaining the final document and so on.

Key words: special education, special needs education, exceptional education, SPED, special education teachers, special services, assessments of capabilities, students' disabilities, special needs students with identified disabilities.

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1. Introduction

For a significant period of time in the United States, the primary goal of children with disabilities, their parents, teachers, and community organizations has been access to an adequate public education. Thanks to the active movement for equal civil rights for all citizens of the country, the US government has passed a number of legislative acts, including the law "Education for all children with disabilities", "Education of persons with disabilities", "Leaving no child behind" and others. access to appropriate general education for students with special educational needs became possible. According to the US National Center for Education Statistics, in 2015/16, the number of students aged 3 to 21 receiving special education was 6.7 million, or 13% of all US secondary school students. Such a large number of students who needed special educational conditions provoked a deep rethinking of the process of training specialists who could professionally provide the necessary training.

Theoretical and practical aspects of special education were considered in the studies of both Ukrainian and foreign scientists: V. Zhukovsky, O. Zabolotna, V. Kovalenko, T. Koshmanova, D.L. Clark, L. Fischer, C.J. Graddy, M. Hunter, E.F. Iwanicki, J. Kelly, M.S. Lewis, G. Madaus,

T. McGreal, R.F. McNergney, B. Shimberg, L. Shulman, M. Alter, L. B. Shimberg, L.S. Shulman, Hallahan, W.L. Heward, R. Jackson, J.M. A. Lewis, D. L. MacMillan and others. The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature indicates an insufficient number of comparative studies on the training of teachers of special and inclusive education, which is largely reflected in the gaps in the training of domestic specialists in this field and creates the danger of making wrong decisions related to reforms in the field of special education.

The **purpose** of the article is to compare different university programs of special teachers training in education system of the United States of America.

2. The main aim of special education teachers

According to the data of the US National Center for Education Statistics (*Condition for Education, 2018*), as of the 2015/16 school year, almost 95% of all persons aged 6–21 years who according to the IDEA Act (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)) need special education, study in general schools. However, it has been found that American general education teachers in their classes work only with some students who have special educational needs, while special education teachers are fully responsible for the implementation of the entire spectrum of remedial work in the educational institution. Special education teachers act for such children not only as teachers of Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, creating situations for the formation of their social skills, but also generally as organizers of all types of activities (case managers), that is, from the performance of direct educational services to the implementation of administrative duties with arrangement of their living space and regime. Therefore, knowledge of the specifics of the development of children with health disabilities, their needs, the ability to interact with them, knowledge of the requirements of the curriculum of general education and cooperation with other general education teachers are determined by the necessary conditions for the training of a successful special education teacher (*Nikonenko, 2018: 155*). Under US federal law, special needs students with identified disabilities have access to special education services. As a part of these services, each student must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed to meet their specific educational needs. Special education requires special approaches, so the field is regulated by state and federal government regulations and requires depth knowledge of methods of teaching.

As a response to the need, today 871 Colleges and Universities in the United States train special education teachers in at least one specialization, for which 2,400 relevant programs have been developed (*National Council on Teacher Quality, 2022*). As a rule, the curriculum of all programs for training specialists in special education includes such topics for mandatory study as: advanced applied behavior analysis; extended practicum on mental disorders; assistive technologies for students with disabilities; cooperation in inclusive education; practical experience of special education; admission to special education and learning disorders; language learning and ways to eliminate learning problems; development of a program for children with disabilities of preschool and early school age; education of students with autism; education of students with profound mental disabilities; typical and atypical early child development, etc. However, each university is offering its specialist training program it may have certain variations regarding the initial requirements for admission, the curriculum, the duration of training, the need for an internship, obtaining a final document, and so on. To compare, we provide training programs for teachers of special education of several different universities. As a result, the University of Arizona offers primary teachers the opportunity to obtain a master's degree in education and a certificate from special education and provides a double certification from special education

K-12 and an elementary school teacher. Both master's programs last four semesters, consisting of 54 loans, 33 of which are required to obtain a master's degree, and 21 to receive a special education certificate in Arizon. In addition to major courses, all students must undertake practice in primary and secondary school.

3. Traditional Programs

The University of California-Berkeley together with the State University Сан-Франциско (SFSU) offers a joint program of PhD (PhD) from special education. Students are able to choose one of specializations (human development; early childhood, language and literacy; mathematics, natural science and technology; education politics and administration; other selected fields) both in special and general education. The joint doctoral program prepares graduates to work in teaching, research, administrative activities associated with protecting the interests of people with limited opportunities. The advantage is given to individuals who have experience in the field. Program graduates have the right to work in schools, clinics, hospitals and public institutions.

The Washington University Special Education Programme, which ranked sixth in the best programmes of special education based on the US News & World Report, allows students to obtain a master's degree in education in medium-specific education. The 45-credit program is intended for high school teachers for two years. Individual classes are held once a week to four hours. In addition to the development of the skills of working with teachers of general education and the creation of educational programs specifically for students with special educational needs, graduate students receive practical experience, teaching special education lessons during two mandatory practices.

Wanderbilt University Special Education Department offers Bachelor's and Master's Special Education Programs. The four-year Bachelor's program is a bachelor's degree in science that prepares students before receiving the K-12 certificate and work with students with autism, development delays, teaching and emotional or behavioral disorders. Bachelor's students can also obtain double specialty, choosing aside from special education and other specialty such as childhood development, cognitive research, human and organizational research. Students who already have a bachelor's degree in special education or closely related field may continue the university master's degree in education with a emphasis on pre-school education, disability with high level of illness, severe disability and vision problems. In addition to major courses, all postgraduates must undergo a compulsory practice. The Wanderbilt University Special Education Department has been considered the best special education program in the country by US News & World Report.

4. Online and Hybrid Programs

The University of Perdju offers an online programmer of a Master's degree of special education, which can be obtained as teachers for primary license and teachers who already have a license, but want to work as a teacher of special education. The learning program involves advancing 32-45 credit hours, which includes courses on applied behavior analysis for teachers, identification and evaluation of the physical and emotional state of students, advanced auxiliary learning techniques for students with special educational needs.

The University of Cincinnati offers an online education master's degree program for 30 credit hours and offer three ways to obtain it. The first variant of the program involves

training teachers who already have a teaching license to work with children who have light and moderate deviations. Another program "Supporting students with complex needs" involves training educators to work with high school students. The third program involves preparing the leaders of special education that will prepare teenagers and young people with special educational needs to transition from school education to life in society. To be enrolled on this on-line program, the bachelor must have a minimum average score of 3.0 and a valid license for professional teaching.

The University of Georgia offers a bachelor's degree in special education (a general training plan), which can be passed traditionally at the university or fully on-line. The orientation for a general learning program means that graduates will be able to work with students with light deviations, including behavior disorders, learning problems, autism, Asperger's disease, light intellectual deviations or other health violations. The two-year training program is specifically designed for students who seek flexibility in learning. Each semester all students take practice in Georgia schools. Courses include behavior management, training strategies for individuals with limited capabilities and advanced learning techniques for individuals with easy learning.

The Department of Special Education of the University of Kansas offers several online programs for degrees from a master's degree in special education, including a master's degree in middle special education and a master's degree in education of children with a high level of illness. Both programs are designed for licensing teachers who wish to develop their skills with students with different needs. The Secondary Special Ed & Transitions program focuses on assisting high school students who have limited educational opportunities when transitioning to adult life through learning and support strategies, and is a professional development program that does not involve licensing a teacher or special permit to work as a teacher in Kansas. The High-Incidence Disabilities program focuses on developing skills needed to work with children in which a number of diseases are diagnosed, including emotional and behavioral disorders, learning problems and light intellectual disorders are diagnosed. The program involves mandatory passage of practice. In addition to these programs, the program is also offered to train teachers to work with children of autistic spectrum disorders and on-line leader training programs in special and inclusive education. The Kansas University School of Education is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Pedagogical Education (NCATE).

The University of Wisconsin-Stout offers a hybrid programme of a Bachelor of Sciences in Special Education (BSSE), which involves providing an initial license to a teacher in Wisconsin. The BSSE program is designed as a transition program for those who have already received a degree from a junior specialist or technical degree, and offers future special education teachers personalized support and consultation. While curriculum works are mainly executed on-line to obtain the right to the primary teacher's primary license students must undergo special practice. The program involves studying topics such as work with students with cognitive vases, diagnosis and elimination of literacy and mathematics, emotional and behavioral problems of children and teenagers. The program prepares graduates to work with students with special needs on all subjects and at all age levels.

5. Conclusions

After the analysis, we came to the conclusion that American teachers have a number of competing offers from leading universities to obtain the appropriate document that enables the right to work as a special educator. After completing the selected training program, teachers acquire the skills of cooperation with participants in the educational process who have special

needs, they must also be able to diagnose problems and take them into account when working, be able to create conditions for overcoming the problems of student interaction with the educational environment, and also organize the educational process with in order to effectively overcome problems related to health defects. The subject of our further research may be the study of the specifics of setting educational standards in different states of America.

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