

Textbook: Focus on Students' National Identity

## Training manuals focused on people with visual impairments for students of defectology

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### Abstract

This article examines the possibility of using paintings that reflect the image of a blind person as educational content for the training of teachers of special and inclusive school. Foreign research, as well as sociological, cultural and historical analysis of literary sources and content analysis of thematic works of painting and graphics allow us to admit the possibility and significance of using this approach in the educational process. Most of the visual arts depicting the blind reflect the current attitude of society towards them and can influence society, creating both positive and negative stereotypes through specific artistic tools. However, in the pedagogical practice of higher education, the resource of art does not find sufficient reflection. The research results can be useful for the authors of modern teaching manuals that provide training for teachers of the defectological profile.

*Keywords:* typhlopedagogy, fine arts, blind, teacher training, inclusion.

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### Introduction

In the last decade, teacher education has faced the global challenges. Digital and sociocultural transformations of society impose new requirements on the education system as a whole. This means that the system of teacher training should quickly assess the resources and deficits, tactical and strategic

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objectives of the development program (Bobyleva & Zavodilkina, 2017). It is important to take into account that pedagogical education acts as a generator and accumulator of sociocultural values of society. The development of pedagogical thought cannot remain outside the general scientific process. Therefore, modern trends are manifested in pedagogy, associated with the change in scientific rationality, the emergence of new subjects and objects of study. Implementing “practice-oriented training, students are expected to become future competitive participants of professional and social activity” (Manuylova, 2016, p. 69).

Since 2010, the Harvard School has been realizing the "Goodwork" project, which focuses on rethinking ethical issues in the digital media era. An unexpected result of the research work was the conditional formula of "good work" and a responsible professional, respectively: technically perfect (excellent), engaging and meaningful for the individual (engaging), performed taking into account ethical values (James, 2009). Comparing the general idea of a "good professional" with the goals of "Special (defectological) education", we see their intersection line. First of all, it is the recognition of the importance of ethical values. The training of teachers for the system of special (defectological) and inclusive education is based on the values of humanistic ethics. In accordance with the competence-based modern higher education, humanity can be considered as a competence based on a conscious empathetic attitude to a person as a higher value. The future special teacher (defectologist) should be supplied not only with a system of knowledge but also with a formed worldview position in relation to the phenomena of atypical development.

The worldview position of the individual and the process of its formation are actively studied today as an interdisciplinary problem and an integral characteristic. Conventionally, the structure of the worldview can be distinguished by cognitive and axiological components. The basis of a person's worldview is the values that a person learns in the process of cognition and interiorisation of social experience, as it is analyzed by scientists and described in philosophical issues (Izotov & Turyszhanova, 2016; Selivanova, Pavlova & Gorina, 2020). It is important to take into account that each historical stage of human development, different ethos and religions, geographical and natural factors affect the value system of a particular social group. Values are reflected in culture and art. Art is a criterion and marker of the sphere of people's life, related to feelings, taste and creativity. Humanity transmits through art from generation to generation the ideals of beauty, the values of social life, its way of life and identity. Culture in general, and art, have wide opportunities for forming a picture of the world at the emotional and sensory level, unlike science. At the same time, the worldview assumes that the subject has socially significant knowledge, on the basis of which they perform their actions.

However, the real pedagogical reality demonstrates that the axiological component of the worldview is on the periphery of attention in the educational process of higher education. Traditional forms of learning are focused on the transmission of "ready-made" knowledge, its assimilation and subsequent "retransmission". Although the main indicators of quality of education in the Humanities are a formed reflective thinking of a graduate, updating their individual began under the influence of the analysis of alternative points of view on the studied phenomena. Thus, there is a clear contradiction between the understanding of the need to form a worldview position of a special teacher and the pedagogical tools used, limited to the transmission of ready-made knowledge without relying on the emotional component of knowledge.

Taking everything into consideration, the question of creating and using new educational content that will update the academic and value-emotional components of professional readiness arises. A great resource for educational practice is laid down in works of fine art as information carriers (Sokolova, 2020), in which the semantic center is a character with certain restrictions (violations).

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The purpose of this article is to determine the content of the author's content of training manuals that provides an educational training program "Special (defectological) education". Firstly, the variability and the scale of reflection in painting of various aspects of atypical development, works reflecting typhlopedagogic problems were selected for analysis. In plastic art, blindness and low vision are often depicted, as they have a special artistic expressiveness and are associated with a set of ideas about the inner world of the blind, because person's eyes are the most expressive feature of appearance, and the gaze is "the most interesting paralinguistic communication tool" (Sorokin, 2011). Secondly, it is essential to mention that professor of Art Studies at the University of Chicago B. M. Statford addressed to the study of works of fine art and summarized her research in 1993 in the monograph "Criticism of the Body" (Statford, 1993). Besides, professor of the Eye Clinic of the University of Heidelberg V. Jaeger (Jaeger, 1976), German typhlogist D. Edicke (Gudonis., 2000) and domestic typhlopsychologist V. M. Sorokin (Sorokin, 2011) study this problem. The subjects of study of these scientists were medical, psychological and social aspects, which confirms the universality and multidisciplinary nature of the target topic.

The object of the current research is works (reproductions) of fine art as information carriers (Sokolova, 2020), in which the semantic center is a character with visual impairment. It is assumed that reproductions of these works and their artistic and typhlopedagogical analysis can form the content of modern educational content for the training of future teachers of the system of special and inclusive education. Precisely, the

aim of the study can be defined as the following: to establish the trends of mutual influence of works of fine art and society in relation to the blind.

The research uses the following methods: sociological and cultural-historical analysis of literary sources and content analysis of paintings and graphics.

### **Literature review**

In foreign studies of the late 90s of the 20th century, the question of the need to apply multicultural approaches used in general education was discussed by the theorists Sleeter and Grant (1988; 1993). Further analysis of the forms of multiculturalism in art education is carried out in the work of Patricia L. Stuhr (Stuhr, 1994). The author considers multicultural art education as a means of reconstructing society. The purpose of the reconstruction is to provide students with the education more appropriate to the social, political, and economic conditions of the time. It is obvious that this challenge is still relevant for the Russian education system today, as there are still problems of including stigmatized members of society in all aspects of its functioning. Patricia L. Stuhr, following Grant and Sleeter, argues that multicultural education "teaches students to use analytical and critical social skills to analyze and manage their own lives" (Stuhr, PatriciaL., 1994, p. 96). Sleeter and Grant explain and classify five approaches to multicultural education: teaching cultural differences, an approach to human relations, the study of individual groups, multicultural education, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist. The development of these approaches in the US educational practice reflects the social dynamics in relation to discriminated groups. We should pay attention to the fact that art plays an important role in social reconstruction at the educational level. Moreover, art is taught as it is perceived in life, as part of a social and cultural context.

Consequently, the content of the curriculum includes the aesthetic experience of the students for the study of social diversity. Students and teachers, perhaps with the help of community members, collect a variety of data related to the arts, clarify and challenge current values, make reflexive decisions, and take steps to implement them. With the help of a teacher, students can analyze the received information, discuss their feelings and attitudes to it, and challenge existing views and prejudices. Students need to participate in group discussions and adjust their points of view to come up with possible solutions and specific actions regarding the question. We firmly believe, that this multicultural reconstructionist approach can help students become more informed and better citizens of their country. Thus, art can act as an interdisciplinary field, integrating various subject areas around itself for the analysis of social phenomena and further positive social transformations.

The idea of using art to form civil society and train educators is reflected in the research of John Derby (2011, 2016). The article "Research of Disability in Art Education" shows how the academic study of disability in the arts can develop discourses of disability in education. The author offers directions for the inclusion of art and the representation of disability in it in humanitarian curriculum: artistic practices for the formation of identity; critical assessment of the visual representation of individual social and cultural groups for the formation of students' ability to make informed decisions about them; transdisciplinary of artistic practices (integration of all types of creativity with critical analysis and visual production of culture); visual practices are considered as a narrative in which text, object and image are mixed; art as a tactic of interaction with spaces, in terms of their accessibility. Analyzing the pedagogical experience, the author speaks about the need to include research on visual images of disability in the curriculum in such a way as to diversify the voices of tomorrow's scientists, activists, artists and supporters of the rights and dignity of disabled people. Additionally, there are some researches which are devoted to different aspect of this theme. For example, Almazova O.V. Zak G.G. Kozik T.V. (Almazova, Zak, Kozik, 2020) analyze the process of digital education of students with mental retardation, while E. Mustaeva describes how to support persons with disabilities using competency-based training model (Mustaeva, 2019). Valeriy G. Shubovich, Olga V. Vakhteeva, Alena N. Alenova (Shubovich, Vakhteeva & Alenova, 2019) and Lazizbek Khaitov (Khaitov, 2020) devote their scientific researches to training future specialists in the field of defectology.

The development of the ideas presented by John Derby in the article " Confronting Ableism: Exploring Disability in Pre-School Art Education " (Derby, 2016) reflects the discussion of a research project in which the study of disability was integrated into two courses of art education for pre-professional art teachers. The study participants studied the literature on disability and thematic visual culture, developed lesson notes with examples of visual creativity of teachers and artists, in which the phenomenon of ableism was absent. Before and after the project, surveys were conducted on two key elements of ableism: the concept of a normative and non-normative individual, and the strengthening of the constitutional division of the able / incapable. The study found that art teachers were ready and willing to be engaged in studies of disability, and it also demonstrated how art education could help disability research move beyond academia.

For the domestic system of training of special (defectological) specialists, the appeal to the resource of fine art, the study of artistic representations of developmental disorders is an uncharacteristic phenomenon. However, visual art, being immersed in an array of cultural and historical heritage, closely connected with ideology and social ideas, reflects the reality for the entire time of its existence. The demonstrated methods, techniques of depicting, plotting with the participation of people with disabilities, people who differ in

appearance (having obvious signs of deviant development), are correlated with the actual attitude of society towards them. In addition to informational and cognitive-heuristic functions, visual art performs an axiological function, exerting a direct impact on the viewer through sensations, and an educational function, forming a worldview, defining standards of attitude and behavior in relation to people with disabilities, to "others" (Sokolova, 2020).

## **Methodology**

Before going further, we are to mention the fact that our research is based on the following hypothesis: most works of fine art reflect the current attitude of society towards people with visual impairments and are to influence it, creating both positive and negative stereotypes, through specific tools: authenticity, metaphor, artistic and emotional expressiveness of the image, life and social status of the blind. The thematic distribution and interpretation of the image of the blind in the visual arts can be divided into religious and secular subjects, within which there is a subtler differentiation.

We begin our investigation and speculation on the main topic of the article with the pictures. In the painting "Blind Tobit and Anna with the Goat" (1626, Rembrandt Rijksmuseum, National Museum (Amsterdam) reveals a religious theme: blind Tobit repents of the unfounded accusation of his wife Anna in the theft of a goat, which she received as a gift over the payment for work. Tobit is depicted sitting with a pained expression on his face, with his hands raised in supplication, his plastic clearly indicates remorse and desperate pleading. According to the biblical story, the angel Raphael was sent to Tobit, who healed his eyes. Physical blindness is interpreted as a punishment for spiritual blindness, which allowed Tobit to suspect his wife of theft.

Another biblical story is reflected in the painting "The Parable of the Blind" (1568, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, (1525-1569), Capodimonte Museum, Naples). The author depicts six blind people who are groping, holding on to the one in front. The first one falls into a pond along the way. Not only the tense and helpless plasticity of the bodies of the blind is expressive but also the facial expressions and head positions of almost everyone, with a "look" up, associated with the lack of vision and orientation, depict very reliably. In each of the six figures, going to the abyss of people, all the phases of their upcoming fall are shown in stages. Through the physical handicap of the blind, Bruegel shows their moral rebirth, the spiritual blindness of their decision to follow a blind guide. The plot of the picture is connected with the words of the gospel parable (Matthew 15: 14) - "but if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

It is worth mentioning that among secular subjects, the oldest known example of a blind musician in art is a fragment of a fresco on the grave of the Vizier Nahto in Luxor, Egypt, which depicts a blind harpist playing

for feasting guests. The lack of vision is indicated by the image of the eyes in the form of a feature (the eyes seem to be closed), otherwise, the figure and movements of the musician correspond to the canons of Egyptian painting, without additional expression or special plasticity. The fresco is more than 3000 years old. The fact that an enlarged copy of this mural adorns the facade of the wall of the Sharm El Sheikh airport suggests a positive attitude towards the blind in Egypt at the present time, the absence of segregation and stigmatization.

Going further with our research, we draw your attention to the next masterpiece created by Rembrandt Van Rijn's. Precisely, "The Blind Musician" (1631. The Rijksmuseum, the National Museum, Amsterdam) depicts a strangely dressed, as if someone else, in broken shoes, an overgrown man with a violin in his hands, with a small guide dog. The lowered person does not notice that his violin is turned upside down, he tries to extract sounds from it while moving, leading the bow along the body...The musician is depicted in a half-turn, in motion from the viewer, the bent posture, the indifference with which the musician wanders, without trying to expand the instrument is shown by concise graphic means. The image can definitely cause acute pity in the viewer.

It is necessary to mention that everyday subjects with the image of the blind are represented, in particular, in the unfinished painting "The arrival of the schoolgirl to the blind father" (1870. V. Perov. GTG). A haggard, pale man with a sickly smile on his upturned face recognizes by touching the face of the girl kneeling before him. The fact that the girl, most likely, quickly rushed to him, says the glove thrown on the floor. The girl's facial expression, her cheek pressed against her father's hand, shows a high nervous tension: her eyebrows are painfully raised, her mouth is slightly open, as if she is about to cry. "Turgenev of Russian painting" Vasily Perov often chose acute social themes for his canvases. Plastic and facial expressions of the heroes of the canvas "The arrival...", restrained gray-brown color cause strong emotions, make you empathize, feel pity.

What is more, the interpretation of blindness compensation in the painting "The Blind Master" (1884, V. M. Maksimov, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg) is very interesting. On the canvas, against the background of the interior of a peasant hut, a middle-aged man is depicted, intently bringing a spoon with food to the child's mouth. The "gaze" of the blind person is unseeingly turned straight in front of him, and there is concentration and attention on his face. The calm child looks directly at the spoon, which the blind man carefully brings to his mouth. Dexterity, high sensitivity and clarity of movement, accurate orientation, a skill that replaces blind people's vision, contribute to the task. Next to the owner is an unfinished work: a wicker basket, which indicates that the hero is capable of quite demanding fine motor skills. Quite a different emotional feeling from this canvas, if compared with Rembrandt: sunlight from the window,

restrained poses of a man and a child, warm color causes calmness and peace.

An example of a negative standard in relation to the blind can be the circulation poster of K. Rudakov "Illiterate is blind" (1920), which depicts a man walking into the abyss in peasant clothes in a laconic splint manner. The text of the poster reads: "The illiterate is the blind as well. Failure and misfortune await him everywhere." Therefore, blindness is directly identified with illiteracy, such gross manipulation has a negative connotation, causes negative emotions associated with the fear of "becoming blind and unhappy".

Another example from the same time period (the beginning of the XX century) is "The Wedding of the Blind" (1929. M. Bering, MKUK Nizhny Tagil Museum- reserve "The Mining of Ural"). The thirteen characters at the meal and the bride and groom (like Jesus with Mary Magdalene) in the center refer us to the biblical plot of the Last Supper. The main characters of the picture are the blind bride and groom, who seem to be squeezed by a ring of blind guests. The hands of the newlyweds do not touch; the absent eyes are only directed towards each other. The hands in this picture are much more expressive than the faces: broken in plastic, detailed in detail, they clearly indicate the tactile way of perception, exploiting a common pattern, and cause concern with the manner of the image: disproportionate, with pointed long fingers, as if living separately from their owners with absent views. The external unattractiveness of the faces of all the characters emphasizes the negative impression of the canvas. The audience seems to be presented with the idea that the blind, including the metaphorical meaning of blindness, communicate and choose life partners only from among their own kind. Some representatives of modern society also have such a segregational attitude towards people with disabilities, adhering to the opinion that children with disabilities should be educated and brought up in special educational institutions.

## **Results**

A brief retrospective analysis of the possibilities of the language of visual culture in reflecting the public attitude to one of its most vulnerable categories allows us to draw a number of conclusions:

- the use of the language of visual arts to reflect the image of a person with a sensory deficit existed in religious and secular subjects and was inseparable from artistic and socio-cultural traditions;
- regardless of the format of the plot, the religious or secular image of a blind person was overwhelmingly used in a negative connotation as punishment, as a way to arise pity, to inspire fear, as a hyperbole of spiritual blindness. Only in the eastern tradition (Egypt) we see the absence of segregation trends and the prototype of equal inclusion of a person with visual impairments in social life, taking into account their capabilities;

- the language of visual art can not only reflect the attitude of society towards people with sensory disabilities but also initiate reflection, through which it is possible to form new cultural attitudes, guided by the system of spiritual and moral values that have developed in the process of cultural development and the humanistic principle of equality.

Having identified the trends of the mutual influence of works of fine art and society in relation to the blind, we proceed to the definition of its educational (developing) potential as the content of manuals.

### **Discussions**

The analysis of domestic and foreign studies shows that the resources of the visual arts are not fully used for the active promotion of the potential opportunities of the blind. However, it is obvious that the positive attitudes of society towards adults with visual impairment will create more favorable conditions for their social integration, and for children –favorable conditions for adaptation and inclusion in the global sense. Works of fine art reflect the life of a blind person in accordance with the current social and ideological attitudes, which allows students to form critical thinking. Obviously, it is important that in addition to its artistic value, the visual arts language, which reflects the image of a blind person, has a number of features that make it an extremely useful teaching tool.

### **Conclusion**

Summarizing everything above, the student's access to this specific content and its analysis allows us to see clearly that most often a negative attitude towards the blind arises due to the lack of public awareness. It can be assumed that the involvement of the emotional sphere in the educational process through access to works of art will allow the formation of appropriate values, on the one hand, and a system of worldview, on the other. Consequently, the artistic content of manuals can be used as an effective didactic tool for the transformation and destigmatization of social stereotypes of students. Such a professional attitude will allow the teacher to implement one of the labor functions - education at the current level of understanding of the problem.

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