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## STUDY OF WRITING SKILLS IN STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

**Abstract:** Inclusive education is a way, means and approach for high quality education for the students having learning disabilities. Scientists confessed that the students could have difficulties in acquiring academic skills even then they didn't have neurological disorders. Here we should mention that in the 30ies of the XX century teachers and scientists such as Levin, Boskis, Khvattsev, Rau and others started to study dysgraphia (and dyslexia). When we talk more precisely about dysgraphia, the most valuable contribution was done by Kirk, Nevolina, Kornev, Lyapidevsky, Shakhovskaya, Gogoshidze, Tkeshelashvili, Isakadze and others. While formation –development writing skills the students encounter various difficulties and require special assistance, merthodology, activities and resources. In order to study the dynamics of writing skills development among students with learning disabilities at school, it was important to listen to the opinion of teachers of the subject Georgian language and literature and find out how they develop their writing skills. Accordingly, our planned qualitative research was conducted in five public schools of the municipality of Telavi on the basis of fifth-sixth grades. The schools were chosen purposefully, during the preliminary investigation, students with learning disabilities were identified, especially in these classes. All of them are evaluated and an individual curriculum is compiled for them. As a research tool, we used a structured questionnaire prepared in advance by us, which was sent to teachers of the Georgian language and literature (their number is 5). We selected open-ended questions, the answers to which, according to our assumption, would present a kind of picture of the atmosphere in the classroom and the problems associated with the development of writing skills in students with learning disabilities. The research proves that while teaching for students with learning disabilities, one of the obstructive factors is students' low self-evaluation and motivation, aslo not having the skill of self-regulation own learning. While study process it is not managed to effectively improve them. If we don't teach self-regulation of learning to students step by step, s/he will always be relyed on others during learning which will influence self-evaluation and motivation.

**Key words:** Inclusive education, learning disabilities, writing skills, research results.

**Language:** English

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### Introduction

"Inclusive education is an equally accessible educational process in which all students are provided with education taking into account individual, educational needs and opportunities" [11, p 2]. This is a way, means, approach to teaching and educating students with learning disabilities. The basis for the

occurrence of specific learning disabilities is the dysfunction of the central nervous system, which affects the reception, processing, storage and transmission of information. The term "Learning disability" was introduced by the first doctor Samuel Kirk in the second half of the last century. Learning

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Disability (LD) is a general term describing specific types of learning problems.

A weakened learning ability can make it difficult for a person to master certain skills and use them“ [6. p.1]. Samuel Kirk, like other scientists, attaches great importance to learning skills in a child's life: „, these skills are necessary for success at school and at work, as well as for life in general.[6; Page 2] " Subsequently, to assess the skills of students with this type of disorder, Brandar and Goyal confirmed his considerations : "I used the term "learning disabilities" to describe a group of children with disabilities in reading, communication and other language-related skills necessary for social interaction. This group does not include children with sensory impairments, such as visual or hearing impairment“ [1, p.15]

Before and after this definition, proposed by Samuel Kirk, the debate about learning disabilities continues to this day. Samuel Kirk's work allowed subsequent generations to study more deeply and better define what Learning Disability means. This scientist, who has many years of experience working with students with academic problems, mentioned the term "Learning Disability " to describe students who had low reading skills despite their age development .

This has led to a shift in emphasis from the medical point of view to academic difficulties. Instead of referring to brain damage to explain learning difficulties, they began to look at the cognitive processes that formed the basis of the learning process. It was recognized that students may have difficulty processing visual and/or auditory stimuli/information (this also contributes to the acquisition of academic skills), even if they did not have a neurological disorder. It should also be noted that from the 20s to the 30s of the 20th century, such teachers and scientists as Levin, Boskis, Khvattsev, Rau and others began to study dysgraphia and dyslexia. A significant contribution to the study of dysgraphia was made by Nevolina, Kornev, Lyapidevsky, Shakhovskaya, Gagoshidze, Tkeshelashvili, Isakadze and others.

Writing, in general, is a difficult, complex process and is a set of concrete skills, the development of which is one of the important tasks at the stage of primary education. The care and support of academic skills in the learning process begins with the first grade, but it is logical that already in preschool institutions they take care of the development of students' previous academic skills. There are students in the class who are not capable of learning, have difficulties with writing, reading, and writing reports. In many cases, they have medium or high intelligence, or they may have other disorders and may have learning difficulties. Teachers often confuse this problem with teaching problems. Those students who have learning disabilities are very different from each other.

Some have difficulty reading and spelling, others have problems with math skills. Special educational resources are needed . These students, as a rule, require a lot of effort and time to implement the writing process. Kurtsikidze and Tkeshelashvili (2018) offers a list of difficulties, some or all of which may be present in the case of dysgraphia: “

- Reading accordingly, although the difficulties in writing are clearly visible;
- The development of verbal skills precedes the development of writing skills;
- when writing, letters are blurred (in terms of size and shape);
- problems of missing spaces between letters and words;
- writes slowly;
- letters are often confused;
- difficult to change;
- it is difficult to convey your thoughts in writing;
- it is difficult to observe the basic grammatical structure when forming sentences;
- it is difficult to arrange words in the correct order in a sentence;
- does not follow the structure of the text (paragraph, hyphen, paragraphs)
- avoids writing activities.“[9, 14].

For them is also difficult to understand the material that the teacher explains, follow the instructions, communicate with peers and tell the lesson. Otherwise, the problem may be fine motor control of motor skills and imperceptible movements. At such moments, for a child is also difficult to remember how to outline and what movements to make when writing a letter. In some cases, the problem is a violation of the regulation and control of sequential actions. In this case, for the child becomes difficult to perform consistent actions without a supervisor, becomes difficult to follow the instructions of the teacher and perform them in such a way as to control his own mistakes“ [8, 45].

Early intervention is important for all children who have difficulty with reading, writing or other academic skills. The first stage is the assessment and identification of the student, and the next stage is the development of an individual learning plan, where methods are developed for the development of given skills and knowledge acquisition in accordance with the strengths and needs of the child, academic skills, cognition, communication, language - speech, socio-emotional, adaptive physical spheres.

The involvement of different individuals in ILP (Individual Learning Plan) is crucial for achieving the set goals, where efforts and work of subject teachers and special teachers, parents are going on in a complex way. „, Accommodations are changes in the path that the student takes towards the general curriculum, or through which he or she demonstrates his or her own learning outcomes. Accommodation

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provides the same access to learning, does not substantially change the level and content of teaching, is based on the individual strengths and needs of the student. It may vary between matters of intensity“ or level " [4,565].

Moreover, more and more teachers and scientists support the idea that curricula adaptation (accommodation, modification) is beneficial for typical development students as well, and many practical examples of this implementation in the classroom can be witnessed. „ Curricula It should be adapted not only to a student with disabilities, but also to a student with typical development. Adaptation of standard curriculum can be of benefit throughout the period, from students with disabilities to a typical developmental student " [5, 80].

As we have already said, in Georgia, it is regulated at the legislative level that students with disabilities can study at school together with their peers and receive a quality education. However, practice shows that we still have problems in this direction, the reason may be related to various circumstances and factors. Accordingly, it is important for us to investigate the teaching practice of a student with learning disabilities and analyze such issues, circumstances, strategies, monitoring, involvement of the student in the lessons.

More and more studies and educators indicate that during learning disorders, children mostly lose motivation for learning, feel outcast and have low self-esteem. In response, the teacher can make various changes in the physical environment of the classroom, as well as in materials, resources, information delivery style and teaching strategies. The same is argued by Graham, Harris and McKeown(2013), who say that students with learning disabilities often have difficulty writing. These difficulties arise from limited strategies, skills, knowledge and motivation " [3, 127].

In order to study the dynamics of writing skills development among students with learning disabilities at school, it was important to listen to the opinion of teachers of the subject Georgian language and literature and find out how they develop their writing skills. Accordingly, our planned qualitative research was conducted in five public schools of the municipality of Telavi on the basis of fifth-sixth grades. The schools were chosen purposefully, during the preliminary investigation, students with learning disabilities were identified, especially in these classes. All of them are evaluated and an individual curriculum is compiled for them. As a research tool, we used a structured questionnaire prepared in advance by us, which was sent to teachers of the Georgian language and literature (their number is 5). We selected open-ended questions, the answers to which, according to our assumption, would present a kind of picture of the atmosphere in the classroom and the problems associated with the development of writing skills in students with learning disabilities.

Accordingly, the purpose of our study was to determine the process of teaching students by subject teachers, in particular, to identify actions, strategies and support that they carry out for the development of writing skills in students with learning disabilities.

Survey results the majority of respondents at the beginning of the survey identified typical problems associated with writing when teaching students with learning disabilities:

"students experience difficulties with consistent transmission of the content of the text or their opinions, separation of paragraphs, spelling of words, correct use of punctuation marks, recognition of basic information. Their vocabulary is scarce, which is why tautology is often found.“

Sometimes a student has problems with learning, namely, a violation of written and oral speech, difficulties with combining words, reading and writing coherent words."

"Tense manner of holding a pen, elongated body; inability to memorize graphic images of letters and draw them correctly; inability to write letters correctly; fuzzy handwriting; avoidance of tasks requiring writing or drawing; fatigue when writing; pronouncing words aloud during writing; unfinished or missing words in a sentence; inability to systematize thoughts and transfer them to a piece of paper; a big difference between what is written and what is transmitted orally;

it turned out to be very important for us to confirm the opinion often expressed by researchers and teachers about low motivation and self-esteem, inattention, weak organizational abilities, which, in their own opinion, prevents the involvement of these students in the educational process:

"I lost faith in my abilities, got used to being in a passive state, Perhaps lack of interest, low motivation." "The problem arises when I ask to go to the blackboard or ask a separate question. Most of the time he prefers to be in a passive role because of his low self-esteem,“"Low motivation and the feeling that he is not able to learn to write like others,"He has no interest in the learning process, he does not do homework, his motivation is low."

Since the respondents revealed low self-esteem and motivation of students, we naturally wondered what strategies are used to increase students' motivation. Teachers found it difficult to answer this question, answered very generally, and only a small part indicated concrete strategies and activities. which raises doubts that the student may have written in Nacional Curriculum, but the teacher cannot use it in practice.

Teachers who specify motivation-enhancing strategies use reinforcers, e.g., a student would receive his / her car if he / she sat at the desk throughout the

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lesson and performed one task tailored to his / her individual skills given by the teacher. This had a kind of impact on the student's motivation and gradually overcame his behavior.

According to the second educator, social reinforcers work well considering age. Increasing motivation is achieved through activities, tasks and reinforcement tailored to his skills.

"In order to better identify their abilities, some of the respondents spoke about increased responsibility, attention to the student and praise, while some emphasized collaborative learning. They prefer to involve the student in group work: "the student's motivation is to praise, to impose responsibility, to celebrate his achievement in any work, task."

One of the research questions also concerns the academic side: what do teachers use to make a student with disabilities feel confident in himself in class. Of course, one of the questions of the research also concerned the academic side, in this regard, what teachers use to make the student feel himself better in the class.

The study showed that they are familiar with the methods and activities developed and recommended by researchers and scientists that can be used by students with learning disabilities to develop writing skills. that they are familiar with the methods and activities developed and recommended by researchers and scientists that can be used with students with learning disabilities to develop writing skills. "Simplification of the text, its modification, increasing the time limit, repetition and gradual transmission of instructions, graphic systems involving teachers during the assignment, multimodal training, co-education and mutual learning, which will help the student to believe in their abilities and reveal them as much as possible."

In the next question, in order to determine one short-term goal regarding the development of writing skills that they wanted to achieve with the student and the corresponding learning strategies/activities, some respondents could not delve into the question and instead of goals, told about the problems and causes for their appearance.

Thus, teachers still do not know the principles of drawing up an individual curriculum and the methodology of implementation, which we will return to below. However, some respondents also named a need, a goal, and strategies. For example. With the help of a specialist- teacher, we adapted.

"The history of the roe deer" for students with disabilities. We have divided it into episodes and attached illustrations and a brief description to all episodes. The student was provided with this resource in a certain sequence. He had to describe the text and rewrite the text on a piece of paper and read it."

To the question of which specific methods of teaching writing are used by teachers, which of them is more effective, the answers are diverse. One of the respondent's noted that it is too early to talk about this, because according to the plan he started working with the student in October. Some respondents consider it effective to fill out a character map, characterize a character with an illustration, describe a picture, draw and use colored pencils.

„Effectively fill in the character characteristics map, use more visualizations, describe the picture using plot images, and draw and then visualize the content.

The use of colored pencils in the classroom is justified, the child was having fun and wrote letters in different colors, then I asked them to write with pencils of all colors that they had at hand.“

When the class writes a characterization of a person, he writes out a sentence of two or three words from the textbook on the instructions of the teacher. When the class writes a summary of the lesson, it takes the necessary things and consistently forms out the content of the text.“ „ He finds 2-3 qualities in the text and writes it down”. From here you can see the answer of the majority of respondents to the question, most of the survey participants said that they regularly analyze achievements, but some of them find it difficult to achieve their goals

"I conduct monitoring and analysis of the results. It's hard to reach goals." "Yes, I always monitor to know what the child needs. " "Yes, I always make sure to know what the child needs. "The team meets four times a year, and we discuss all the needs, and when we talk about teaching students with learning disabilities, it should be noted that learning disability accompanies a person throughout his life".

Therefore, the development of mechanisms to support students who will develop social skills along with academic ones and contribute to their comfortable stay in society is on the agenda. Therefore, analyzing the answers of teachers about strategies to increase student motivation, we did not see any useful and scientifically based intervention for students with impaired writing skills, for example, the so-called self-regulation strategy (which we do not touch in detail in this study "(SRSD)", which: "is a six-stage strategic model", in which as a result of which the writing process in all subjects becomes complete, automatic and flexible [3, p.437].

Albert Bandura and Laura Burke also point out the advantages of using self-regulation strategies and offer a special table on how children develop self-regulation skills with age, and accordingly formulate strategies that teachers can offer students to develop self-regulation skills.

We came to the following conclusions: the study confirms that one of the important factors hindering the learning process of a student with learning

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disabilities is his low self-esteem and motivation, as well as the inability to self-regulate his own learning, the increase of which cannot be effectively achieved in the learning process. If we do not teach a student with disabilities to self-regulate their learning step by step, they will always depend on others in their learning, which will also affect self-esteem and motivation. Teachers- do not properly take care of the development of writing skills of students with limited opportunities. Subject teachers find it difficult to name goals and strategies to be achieved with such students There is a shortage of teaching strategies for students with disabilities.

### Recommendations:

Training of subject teachers in the direction of inclusive education is necessary;

- It is important to help students improve self-esteem, motivation, achieve active involvement in the educational process;

- It would be desirable to teach the student a positive assessment of himself, self-efficacy and management of his own learning e.BC. With the inclusion of self-regulation strategies, which are becoming increasingly popular among researchers of foreign educational systems and practice, they prove their positive impact on the development of writing skills of children with learning disabilities.

It is advisable to review the individual curriculum and develop authentic strategies and assignments.

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