The Role of Informational Technologies in Special Needs Education

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The Role of ICTs in SNE

The educational needs of people with disabilities are vastly diverse. On the one hand, they must, as their peers, get knowledge and skills required in the society in which they live. On the other, they have (by definition) additional demands (often referred to as special educational needs) caused by functional limitations which affect learners' ability to access standard educational methods of instruction, therefore, prevent educational progress. In this context, ICT application is very important as it plays an essential role in providing high quality education for students with disabilities. ICTs have been introduced into the teaching-learning process in order to improve quality, support curricular changes and new learning experiences. In this way it is possible to meet the specific learning needs of different learner groups, including students with disabilities.

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Compensation uses

Didactic uses

Communication uses

* ICTs In Education for Peoples with Special Needs: Specialized Training Course / Ed. Edwards, Al. // UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education/. — Moscow, 2006

ICTs for Compensation Uses

That is the use of new technologies as a technical assistance that allows students with special needs to take active part in the process of interaction and communication: if a person has motor disability he may be helped to write, or to read if a person is with a visual deficiency (among many other possible examples). From this point of view ICTs develop the students' ability to control their environment, make choices about their experiences, support problem-solving, give access to information, thereby enhance communication with others both in the immediate environment and around the world. In other words, technology can recoup or substitute the lack of natural functions.

ICTs for Didactic Uses

ICTs used as a learning tool have prompted a new dimension of education and launched the transformation of the educational approaches. ICT application brings a variety of new teaching and assessment strategies for students with different educational needs.

Here we must note that information technologies as a didactical tool are suitable for implementing the inclusive education. In order to enhance personal development, educational initiatives within the inclusive curriculum must aim at meeting unique needs, differences, and abilities of an individual; hence they must be fully supported to achieve these goals at an appropriate pace. Information technologies, thereupon, will become a valuable resource for inclusion.

ICTs for Communication Uses

Technologies can mediate communication with people having disabilities (often referred to as Alternative and Augmentative Communication). Assistive devices and software to meet the needs of students with definite communication difficulties are specific to every disability. We talk about the computer as a resource that eases and makes the communi-cation possible, allowing a person with communicative disorders to exhibit his/her abilities in a more convenient way, or people with motor and communicative disorders to start communication, show the needs and make the demands. Furthermore, where teachers are in short supply (as in special education) distance teaching methods can help provide special services between geographically dispersed students and teachers.

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