

# ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' NEEDS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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## Abstract

Inclusive education is a current phenomenon in Slovakia that is associated with improving the quality of higher education. Quality education must create adequate conditions for all groups of both regular students and students with specific educational needs. It is therefore necessary to create conditions for increasing the well-being of university students in the educational process. If we want to increase the well-being of higher education students, we must first of all find out what the students' needs are. Within the project KEGA 004UCM-4/2022 "Promoting Health and Well Being through Inclusive Education in Higher Education" and project BIN SGS02\_2021\_002 with the name "University enhancing active smart aging" the research team carried out a qualitative analysis of students' needs through the one-page profile methodology. This methodology has been used in Slovak higher education institutions since 2018 to identify students' needs in the area of education and personal growth. The paper presents the results of the analysis in the third category of the one-page profile "how to support me". The analysis presents a comparison of needs prepared on the basis of subjective statements of Slovak university students. The research sample consisted of 96 part-time students and 98 full-time students. As a result of the analysis, the basic categories of needs of university students in student and personal life are identified.

**Keywords:** *Wellbeing, needed, university student, inclusive education, one-page profile.*

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## 1. Educational inclusion

Inclusion in the conditions of Slovak universities is understood as an innovative approach in the field of education, which primarily emphasizes the right of every student to quality education.

Inclusion in general is a never-ending process in which people with disadvantages can, to the greatest extent possible, participate in all activities in society like the majority. It is therefore the natural inclusion of all people into society, taking into account the individual characteristics of each person (Kováčová, 2019). Inclusion assumes that all people are different and everyone can co-create and co-determine. The individual groups in society must not only adjust to one another.

Educational inclusion emphasizes the right of every student to quality education. It is a flexible process with the aim of creating an educational environment in which the diverse educational needs of each individual can be met without exception. The full participation of students with specific needs in the educational process is likely to increase their success and prevent them from distancing themselves from education, for example. Educational inclusion includes all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions, regardless of race, religion, disability, impairment, social background, aptitude or gender.

In order to ensure the creation of appropriate study conditions for all students and students with specific needs, the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (Slovakia) has developed a guideline to ensure a generally accessible academic environment for students with specific needs. On one hand, this directive regulates the principles of a generally accessible academic environment for students with specific needs, the concept, characteristics, rights and responsibilities of students with specific needs. On the other hand, it regulates the rights and responsibilities of the University in providing a generally accessible academic environment for students with specific needs. The Directive establishes the status, mission and responsibilities of the Support Centre for Students with Specific Needs, the rights and responsibilities of university staff and organizational units in providing a generally accessible academic environment for students with specific needs.

Students with specific needs at the University include students with disabilities and learning disabilities. A student with a disability is a student:

- Who has a disability (visual, hearing, physical, communication impairment, autism or other pervasive developmental disabilities or multiple disabilities) that prevents said student from

participating equally in the educational process and achieving the desired outcomes as compared to a student without a disability;

- With a chronic illness, mental illness and impairment of a short-term, long-term or permanent nature for which the student needs reasonable accommodation and educational support.

Students with learning disabilities are students who have difficulty acquiring or presenting knowledge. Students with specific needs are defined as students who require targeted support services and reasonable adjustments to their learning to overcome their disadvantage without reducing the demands on their learning outcomes.

## 2. Research design and method

In inclusive higher education, the main goal is to create adequate learning conditions for all students. Therefore, it is necessary, among other things, to ascertain their educational and personal growth needs. With this aim in mind, in the project KEGA 004UCM-4/2022 “Promoting Health and Well Being through Inclusive Education in Higher Education” and project BIN SGS02\_2021\_002 with the name “University enhancing active smart aging”.

We have chosen a qualitative analysis of students' needs through the one-page profile methodology. Through the one-page profile, university students/respondents answered three questions profiling individual preferences and needs (“What is important to me?”, “What do people like about me?”, “How can others support me (in what I want to achieve)?”). The above questions were answered briefly by respondents within the stipulated one-page limit. Thus, respondents had to capture the essence without introducing unnecessary ballast. Even simple answers create a prerequisite for understanding a person's individual needs (onpageprofiles.wordpress.com).

In the qualitative analysis of one-page profiles we chose the method of content analysis of text documents. Content analysis as a research method is a procedure for objectively, systematically and quantitatively describing the apparent content of communication (Hendl, 2016). By aggregating and otherwise quantifying content units within their qualitative categories (concepts, ideas, themes), content analysis organically incorporates the qualitative aspect of the text. The most frequently applied of the quantification procedures is the detection of the frequency of occurrence of the analytical category in text. We found this quantification procedure to be the most appropriate for processing students' written accounts. In the first stage, we determined the analytic categories of the content, which formed a system of fixed indicators that we used to classify the recording units. The units of record in the analysis of the one-page profile utterances were the most frequently occurring ideas in the form of superordinate parts of the whole. These supra-sentential parts of the whole were not written with the same words, but their narrative value and meaning were the same. These were then assigned to the analytic categories we had established in our preliminary reading of the texts. The number of recording units then indicated a match in preference for students' needs in learning and personal development.

## 3. Analysis of research findings and their interpretation

Given the scope of the paper, we will present the results of the analysis in the third category of the one-page profile “how to support me”. The research sample consisted of one-page profiles submitted by 96 part-time students and 98 full-time students. In the preparatory reading, we established 6 analytical categories in the external form of study. For each category we provide examples of recording units. The frequencies in percentage terms are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Occurrence of record units in the external form of study.

Analytical category	Number of recording units v %	Example unit of record from one-page respondent profile
1. Support from family and friends	68%	<i>"I am supported by my family and friends who share every success and failure with me".</i>
2. Support from colleagues in the workplace	30%	<i>"When difficulties are caused by unexpected events, have the support and cooperation of colleagues in the workplace".</i>
3. Clearly defined objectives, task assignments, activities and timetable	19%	<i>"I prefer clear and concise assignments. Defining goals means for me an outcome that I will try to work towards".</i>
4. Teacher support, Faculty support	28%	<i>"When a professor is human and willing to help and praise, that's enough to motivate me and move me forward in life."</i>
5. Open and direct Communication	26%	<i>"Transparent communication is important to me in carrying out any activity".</i>
6. Feedback	24%	<i>"I find constructive feedback that offers positive alternatives most beneficial."</i>

In the same way we performed the analysis of one-page profiles of full-time students. We established 6 analytical categories. The frequencies in percentage terms are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Occurrence of record units in full-time study.

Analytical category	Number of recording units v %	Example unit of record from one-page respondent profile
1. Support from family and friends	61%	"I am very supported in my life by my family and friends. I know I can turn to them and trust them at any time".
2. Support and empathetic approach from neighborhood	48%	"My surroundings can support me by understanding me and not judging me for my emotions and decisions".
3. Clearly defined objectives, task assignments, activities and timetable	13%	"They will give me as much accurate information as possible about what is expected of me, so that I have a better idea of the issue at hand and can deal with it in the best possible way."
4. Teacher support, Faculty support	2%	"It helps me a lot in my studies on campus when teachers are patient with me because my beginnings are always slow".
5. Open and direct Communication	23%	"The best support for me is open and honest communication".
6. Feedback	23%	"Feedback is as important to me as knowing that I am heard and understood".

### 3. Conclusion

The analytic categories in both forms of study are the same in numbers. The only difference is in category 2 where external students need the support of their colleagues in the workplace and full-time students need the overall support of people around them. The comparison of the above analyses in the form of tables shows that students in both external and full-time forms of study equally consider the support of family and friends to be the most important in their education and personal development. Support and empathetic attitude from the environment and support from colleagues in the workplace ranked second in preference. The difference in preferences is particularly evident in category 3. Support from teachers is needed more by external students than by full-time students, which seems to result from the extent of personal contact full-time and external students have directly with their teachers. Both groups of students equally need open communication, feedback and clearly defined goals and activities for their studies and personal development. The above analysis shows the need for the development of communication competences and didactic competences of university teachers.

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