

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES IN AN ESP CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This paper describes the experience of Ukrainian educators in the promotion of social inclusion for internally displaced students. Attention is paid to the analysis of key notions and concepts of social inclusion in education, and the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusion strategies. This paper investigates the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive communication strategies implementation in ESP courses. The choice justified by its communicative orientation and focus on social interaction. One hundred and ten internally displaced students and fifteen ESP teachers participated in the study. The study presents the results gained from interviews with Ukrainian students and ESP teachers from Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. A comparative analysis revealed the positive dynamics in internally displaced students' well-being after the implementation of inclusive communicative strategies. The findings support the idea that the well-being of internally displaced students can be improved with the implementation of individualization, diversification, and differentiation integrated into the ESP classroom.

Keywords: inclusion, higher education, internally displaced students, communicative strategies, differentiation, ESP

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Thousands of internally displaced Ukrainian students have been out of their universities due to severe circumstances. They are experiencing the challenge of establishing new social networks, integrating into the academic environment, and overcoming stress and trauma. Still, regardless of the current location, the state guarantees equal opportunities for every student to acquire knowledge and participate in the educational process. Nevertheless, some factors might cause learning barriers for such students in the 'new' host communities – cultural, social background, psychological traumatic experience, new requirements, a lack of resources, etc. The situation is worsened by the loss of house and belongings and separation from a family, as a result, we encounter with vulnerable and sensitive students even within Ukraine and such students require special attention in terms of social inclusiveness.

Considering inclusion, we usually think of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). But all over the world social inclusion is a priority due to the increasing number of other factors for the exclusion and learning barriers: social crises, conflicts, natural disasters, military invasions, migration, etc. Such students are in urgent need of transformative measures to ensure their right to study. Although the situation with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is focused extensively, education arrangements for displaced students are still beyond the scope of inclusion.

In this paper, we are concerned with the barriers and opportunities that internally displaced students have on their way toward social inclusion. We consider that English Language classes might contribute to the social learning barriers elimination and students' well-being by developing interpersonal communicative skills. Thus, the study aims to share the experience of social inclusive approach integration in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at polytechnic university. For this purpose, we have analysed and adopted the technologies of inclusive education for our realm and carried out the survey to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive technologies in the ESP course.

Theoretical background

It is one of the democratic values that human rights should not be violated for those people whose capabilities and needs differ from generally accepted norms. Equal access to education is critical for the development of an inclusive society. One of the

fundamental principles of creating a single European educational space including Ukraine, is the availability of high-quality consistent education, not only for SEND students but for internally displaced students (IDS) as far as they have special needs and opportunities. Ukraine supports many international conventions that require members to domesticate inclusive education agendas, including the 'World Conference on Education for All (1990)' and 'Salamanca Statement, 1994'. Ukraine's commitment is demonstrated in local frameworks such as the Law of Ukraine on ensuring the rights of displaced people, and the Law of Ukraine on education regarding the peculiarities of access of persons with special educational needs to educational services.

Therefore, representatives of educational institutions are obliged to take into account all the diversity of the characteristics, needs, and requirements of students and meet them halfway to ensure the acquisition of core knowledge and skills. Communication skills are among 21st-century skills that are developed while Foreign Languages learning. General English, as well as English for Specific purposes, are disciplines that enhance not only students' English proficiency but their communicative abilities (Marzukiet al, 2013). Thus, in our opinion, ESP and GE are among the paramount disciplines where inclusive technologies should be implemented. Social interaction and sociocognitive perspectives in language classes facilitate the negotiation of meaning and emotions. Therefore, opportunities to interact through a foreign language, to create their context and pragmatic reactions eliminate the psychological constraints caused by a traumatic experience.

Despite the positive dynamics of inclusive education promotion in all European countries, there is still narrowed perception of its nature as an approach only for disabled students. However, social inclusivity implies the perception of different kinds of diversity, and displacement is one in the range. Social inclusion is defined by Yates (2011) as "valued recognition" that refers to the recognition and respect of difference and diversity in the community but not as a simple inclusion of newcomers into a community as a member with limited opportunities. According to Diversity and Inclusion report (2021), internal or external displacement results in a life crisis and is considered now a global phenomenon. There are no less than a staggering 68 million people around the world now displaced due to conflict or persecution, 40 % of whom are about 18-24 years old. According to Cohen et al. (2018), inclusive education opens equal access to education for

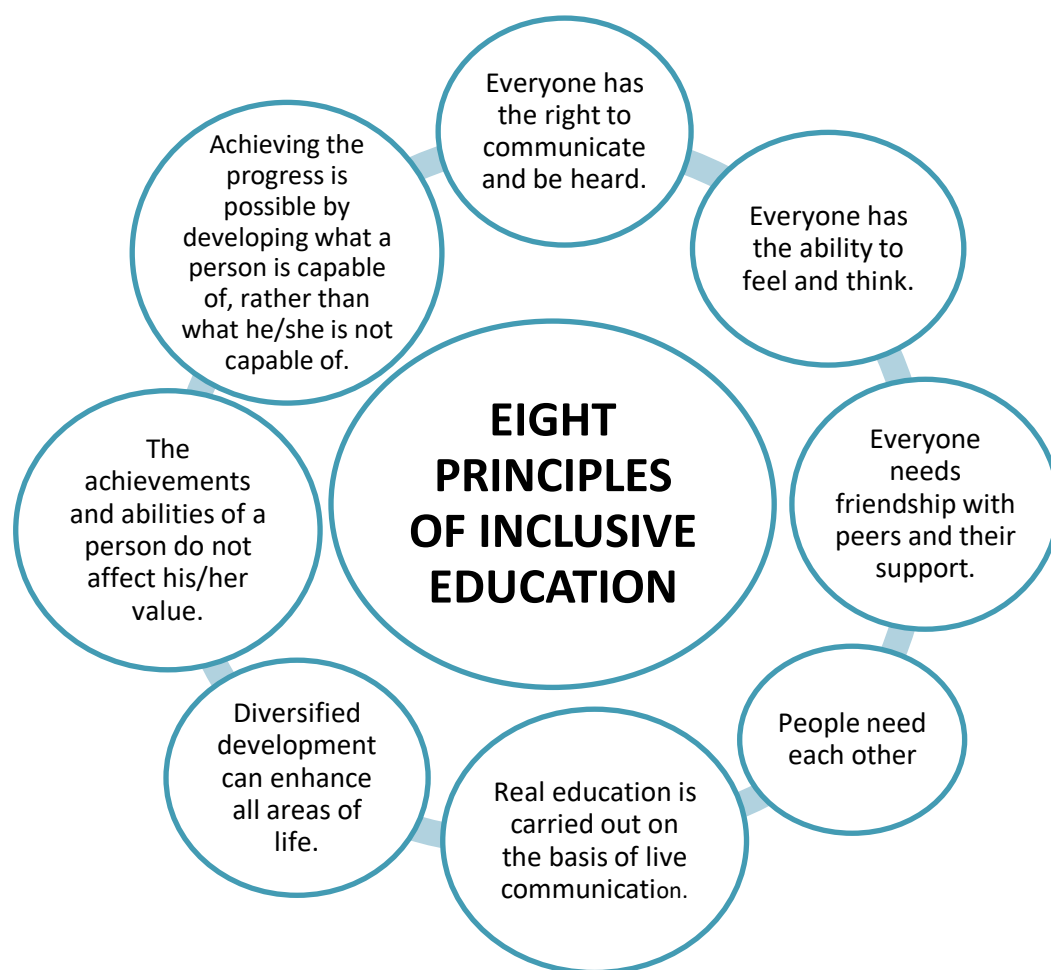
everyone and it involves the creation of adapted programs and teaching methods, taking into account the psychological trauma, new requirements in the new high school system, a lack of resources, loss of house and belongings, displacement to the new region, and fear of changes.

Internally displaced students should be involved in the educational process in its full meaning which is not limited to academic achievements. Meaningful inclusion of displaced students should address not only academic needs but social and emotional needs (Cerna, 2019). We consider that humanitarian subjects such as English Language or ESP might be of great help to satisfy these needs and to overcome separation, trauma, and loss through communication and developing interpersonal skills. Since the socialization of students takes place in educational institutions, it is necessary to create special conditions for internally displaced students so that their social skills develop simultaneously with their peers. ID students may experience exclusionary social-cultural barriers in new institutions and locations and we witnessed cases of physical integration without social inclusion that was described in Dryden-Peterson's research (2011). It might cause feelings of instability and social tension among learners. ID students' feelings of alienation may also develop because of a "cultural trauma", the concept developed by Alexander (2004). He claims that this phenomenon takes place when students' cultural identity and memory are changing in an irreversible way that might cause the atrocity occurrence and perception of it as a consequence of their diversity. Taking part in discussions, listening, and reading bio narratives about people with the same background and problems, the creation of cultural-language projects stimulates displaced students' inclusion and serves as a well-being restorative tool as well.

Having analyzed sources on ID learners' inclusion (Kinsella & Senior, 2008; Mendenhall et al. 2020) we came across eight principles of social inclusive education that resist the infringement of internally displaced students' rights (Figure 1).

These principles are not about the elimination of physical learning barriers, but they highlight the importance of personal values and abilities. Communication skills are regarded as a key tool for the implementation of the principles. Educators should shift from searching students' weak points and mistakes discussion to the identification of strong points and directions for improvement. It will create a positive and safe educational environment that eliminates stress, low self-esteem, and fear of mistakes. From the

perspective of language learning, semantic and pragmatic aspects offer opportunities to use the foreign language for narration and live communication in various communicative situations without being completely personal and thus facilitate learning, motivation, and a sense of self. Communicating in imaginary situations allows students to express their ideas and fears, observe peer reactions, and test communicative strategies to construct safe, real-life communication in the future. If social contacts through foreign languages are



positive, they contribute to the impression of being welcomed.

Figure 1. Eight principles of inclusive education

The studies indicate that there is a relationship between social inclusion and language learning that might be regarded as the beneficial synergy for learning barriers elimination.

Methods

The paper represents a case study conducted between April 2022 and September 2022, exploring students' and teachers' perceptions of the learning needs of ID students

and how inclusive pedagogy can be employed in this respect. The study took place in a real-life setting (Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute), facing real-life educational issues (social inclusion of internally displaced students) with follow-up solutions and reflections (inclusive strategies integrated into ESP teaching). To achieve the goals of the study, a complex of interrelated methods of scientific research have been used. The multiphase nature of the research is explained by the stages of the study. We carried out a systematic review of the literature to construct a conceptual framework of the study at the first stage. The second stage involved the empirical study to verify the hypothesis of the study. An interpretive approach disclosing the data sense (Creswell, 2014) was applied in the third stage. The main theoretical methods used in the study are analysis and synthesis of psychological and pedagogical literature to formulate the initial notions and clarify the main ideas that form the theoretical basis of the study. The empirical methods used in the study are the observation of the educational process when inclusive technologies were used during ESP and GE classes; the quantitative and qualitative analysis of experimental data to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive technologies during ESP and GE teaching internally displaced students.

Participants

To illustrate the impact of inclusive technologies on the communicative skills development and psychological well-being of internally displaced students, the study was carried out among 110 students at Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute who were internally displaced from different regions of Ukraine. A judgmental sampling technique was applied for the participant selection. Participants from both groups (students and teachers) were chosen based on the authors' judgment and expectations. The key criteria for students sampling were internally displaced students of 2-3 courses and B1 language level. A group of 15 ESP teachers participated in the study. They were also purposively selected due to the presence of educational experience in inclusive technologies implementation such as technologies of individual support (individualization), technologies of differentiation, technologies for correcting educational and behavioral difficulties, and technologies for the development of effective social skills. Students' participation was voluntary and did not lead to any academic consequences in case of exclusion from the study.

Data collection tools and Procedure

The semi-structured interview was chosen based on the idea that it is providing an opportunity to explore additional information about students' and ESP teachers' attitudes and perceptions concerning the implementation and impact of inclusive technologies for the improvement of students' well-being. The participants of the survey were suggested with the following questions (Figures 2 and 3, see Appendix).

We intentionally asked the same questions on advantages and disadvantages to compare the ideas mentioned by students and teachers. The questionnaires were given after the integration of inclusive practices into language learning. Peer-observation teachers' protocols were also applied as an additional tool for the data collection. The integration of practices was performed for 3 months May-June. The data analysis was carried out by using content analysis for open answers and observation protocols. The Likert scale was analyzed by the distribution of responses.

Results

The purpose of the experiment was to find out teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions of strategies for social inclusivity integration in English Language classes. The analysis of experimental data indicated that approximately two-thirds of the ESP teachers (65 %) agreed that attending training or webinars would be quite helpful for them in choosing proper inclusive technologies to work with internally displaced students. 78% of ESP teachers agreed that the psychological well-being of their students improved after the integration of inclusive technologies. However, there rest of the teachers (22%) expressed doubts (disagreed) regarding immediate improvement and suggested that inclusive strategies might have prolonged action and would be seen in the future. Among the key challenges, educators admitted anxiety (92%), feeling of uncertainty and low self-esteem (84%), low level of motivation to study (88%), problems with emotional control (63%), refusing to communicate and participate in learning activities (51%), and problems with concentration (44%). Answering the question on inclusive strategies, teachers mentioned scaffolding, active involvement in goals setting and reflection, cooperative tasks instead of individual ones, peer assessment, tasks differentiation, provide more social-cultural discourse for communication and negotiation.

Students' answers demonstrated that 93% of students confessed that relocation affected their study and motivation:

"What is the sense of studying if I lost my house and the sense of stability? I can move tomorrow to another place".

Ukrainian universities are autonomous and differ in curricula or systems of assessment. However, general academic requirements and rules are similar. Nevertheless, some students (37%) admitted that the requirements were completely different and their university rules were more understandable. 68% of students confirmed that language classes helped them build social networks, communicate with peers, and, thus, adapt to a new university and improve their well-being. Due to the variability of tools and forms for self-expression, students found the process of knowledge demonstration interesting and engaging.

Regarding the answers on advantages and disadvantages, students and teachers admitted that inclusive technologies (differentiated activities for students) contributed to socialization and eliminated the fear of communication, simplified social acceptance, and eased the adaptation of internally displaced students to the learning environment. Teachers added the increasing motivation to study, more willingness to communicate, and higher academic achievements in language study.

Among the disadvantages named by survey participants were the not equal and fair assessment, a stereotype that ID students have a lower level of education. Teachers also added difficulties of working in mixed-ability classes when there were more than 25 students, difficulties with the provision of inclusion online, and the discrepancy between the syllabi and the real possibilities of the students.

Talking about advantages students who participated in the survey emphasized that studying in an inclusive environment provides them with the opportunity to make friends among their peers and adopt social models of behavior. The internally displaced student said:

"Debating together with my groupmates, they knew me better. And they did not have to ask me awkward questions about me."

About 80% of students expressed their thoughts that English language classes enhanced adaptation to the learning environment, one of the internally displaced students said:

“When we discussed the topic of higher education around the world and different types of qualifications, rules, and requirements, we compared them to Ukrainian requirements and rules. It helped me understand new rules at this university. So, it was easier to enter the learning process”.

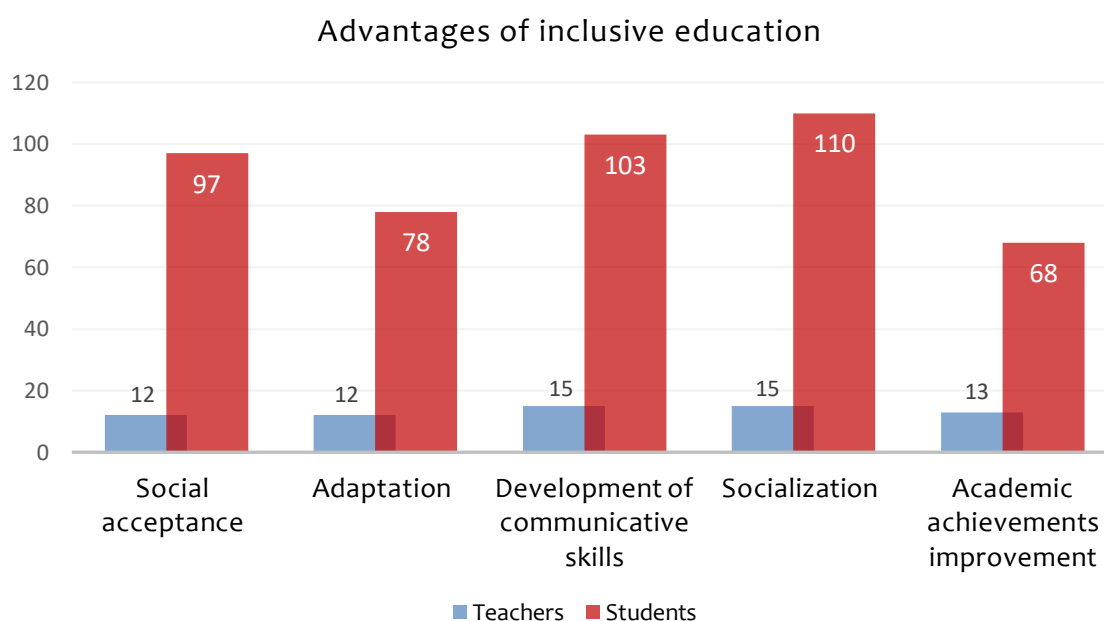
When interviewing about advantages one of the teachers said:

“In one group I implemented the technology of mixed differentiation for most speaking tasks. As a result, students from both groups ID and non-ID learned their strong points and knew how to show them more beneficially.

The summarized classification of advantages is demonstrated in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4

Analysis of experimental data provided by ESP teachers and students.



A small number of ESP teachers (37%) pointed out such disadvantages as the discrepancy between the syllabi and the real possibilities of internally displaced students and the lack of experience and knowledge in creating an inclusive environment. The ESP teacher who participated in the survey said:

“When I got an information that in my class would be internally displaced students, I spent several weeks watching online webinars dedicated to the inclusive technologies that could be implemented during English classes.”

Not all students accepted the idea of differentiation and distribution into groups. One of the recipients said:

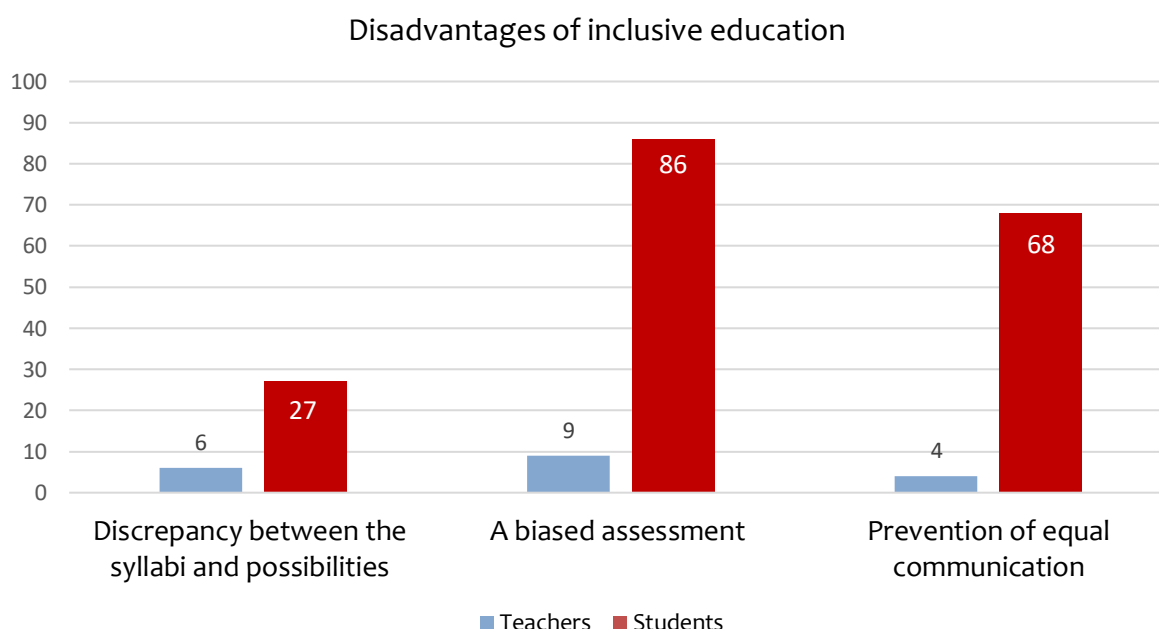
“I don’t really like when the English teacher differentiates us by levels. Once students in my class were divided into three groups to listen and discuss the professional topic: students who spoke English well, students who spoke English worse, and internally displaced students. Of course, each group requires different levels of learning assistance. I think such an approach provides us with a lower level of education. Even more, it deprives us of communication with other groupmates”.

Some ESP teachers mentioned that even despite their tries to create an inclusive environment the learning process is hampered by social and behavioral difficulties. The ESP teacher said:

“Some internally displaced students can’t collaborate with their classmates due to psychological trauma and fear”.

Figure 5

Analysis of experimental data provided by ESP teachers and students when



While there are many successful examples of how internally displaced students function in an inclusive environment, at the same time there are students who suffer from a biased assessment due to a condescending attitude or feel inconvenient due to the differentiation according to the level or location. It is obvious that such an approach should be eliminated.

Having analyzed peer-observation protocols, we calculated the frequency of communicative inclusive tasks which were implemented during the ESP classes to improve students' psychological well-being and students' attitudes to the tasks performed in an inclusive environment.

Table 1

Frequency of inclusive strategies used in the ESP classroom

Inclusive strategies	Frequency	Students' positive response	Students' negative response
1. Individualization	32	93	17
2. Differentiation by levels	19	47	63
3. Differentiation by function	28	98	12
4. Mixed differentiation	31	88	22
5. Strategies for correcting educational and behavioral difficulties	17	20	10
6. Strategies for the formation of social interaction skills	41	78	32

Thus, we can suggest that even taking into account the drawbacks of inclusive technologies, their implementation in the educational process provides considerable assistance in improving the personal well-being of internally displaced students.

Discussion

Motivation and confidence are two very important factors that improve the social skills of internally displaced students and reduce their stress when interacting with other people. Internally displaced students should be provided with access not only to formal education but also to alternative flexible learning pathways. There is a need to shift to flexible non-formal education, where students can learn and pursue their future. While implementing the inclusive strategies, teachers admitted that not only teaching should be changed, there was a need for some organizational transformations. This idea is supported by Ainscow and Miles (2009) who claim that inclusion technologies can be divided into two groups organizational and pedagogical. The first one is aimed at creating a plan, conditions, and learning process, setting the desired results. While the second one is considered as a methodological solution and content selection. Five types of inclusive strategies can be identified: based on individual approach (individualization); based on differentiation; based on correcting educational and behavioral difficulties; based on the development of social skills; and inclusive assessment.

Most ID students demonstrated low level of self-esteem and confidence because they had lost a control over their lives and education that gave them feeling of stability. To provide students with the sense of a control, it is necessary to empower them with the opportunity to be involved into the learning process: to choose topics for discussion, tools for self-expression, groups for cooperation. Such activities create the feeling of a control and enhance

self-determination. Students admitted that when they got some level of autonomy and independence, they did not feel as victims of the circumstances any more. These observations are in a line with Pisotskaya's (2018) study. She emphasizes that the main task of inclusive pedagogy is to create conditions for the independence of internally displaced students. The teacher should help students understand the goals of learning, choose authentic and relevant education material, and suggest a variety of ways to find solutions.

Most teachers employed the differentiation as an inclusive strategy. We tried to implement the differentiation in groups suggested by Barres et al. (2014) according to language or educational background level, communicative function, or a mixed option. Differentiation by levels occurs when students in one class are distributed into three groups: high-achievers, medium-achievers, and students with psychophysiological problems. Each group requires different levels of learning assistance. The essence of the technology lies in the fact that a teacher sets tasks feasible for each group and helps in case of failures. For example, conducting ESP classes with academic groups that major in energy management, a teacher starts the ice-breaking activity by talking about the future that Ukraine will face after the war, about renewable energy projects that Ukraine will need. Speaking about future and making optimistic predictions help students overcome fear of the global destruction, motivates all students to work harder and provides a feeling of confidence and safe future for all students. Then, during the main part of the class, a teacher uses differentiation by levels to perform the task. The short description of inclusive language activity differentiated by levels is demonstrated in *Figure 6* (see Appendix).

Analyzing the observation protocol of the described class, educators mentioned that all groups successfully completed the task. However, what emerged as an interesting fact is that some students highlighted the implementation of differentiation by levels as a reason for the low level of education, because it deprives them of communication with their groupmates and provides a low level of education. In fact, in their ways, the students have highlighted the idea expressed by Veck et al. (2018). The researchers emphasize the necessity of meaningful and thoughtful use of differentiation using more criteria for differentiation. We understand this concern and recommend distribution groups according to other criteria and/or mixing students with different levels. But, in this case, students' roles should be well elaborated, and it will move to the functional differentiation.

Differentiation by function (Figure 7, see Appendix) means the distribution of tasks by functions so that everyone can take an action for a common result. The work of such groups is focused not only on the result but the coordinated collaborative interaction of students. In every group, each student takes on different functions, for example, the first one takes the function of a leader, the second sets goals (what to talk about in presentation), the third searches for a useful functional language, the fourth one keeps track of time, and so on.

Mixed differentiation is a model of general groups in which students are grouped according to levels and interests. The teacher organizes three consolidated groups. The first consists of students who are interested in a particular subject. The remaining two are from students who help the first group achieve overall results.

Based on the results of our empirical study, we can claim that inclusive language activities contributed to students' well-being improvement (fear level decreasing, control over emotions, active and open communication, higher level of self-esteem and self-confidence), expressing his/her mind in public without fear, becoming more confident language user due to development of communicative skills and more knowledgeable on the subject matter.

Communicative inclusive practices create comfortable and safe conditions for teaching internally displaced students. Their main idea is the constant monitoring of the interaction and timely removal of barriers. Wilkerson et al. (2013) promoted in their study three types of strategies for the formation of social interaction skills: demonstration, socialization through imitation, and socialization through activity. Demonstration of social skills takes place when a teacher demonstrates the rules of behavior and participates in interaction with students. Socialization through imitation is a strategy of peer education when a student who is successful in some educational area becomes an example for others. The imitation method is especially important when teaching students with a traumatic experience. These strategies are feasible to implement in English Language classes as most time of the class and many practices are focused on interaction and developed for the interaction that is partially personal and partially fictional.

We support the idea that stability and safety are very important for internally displaced students. As there is a high rate of mobility among these students, it is important to make sure that they have adequate and continuous education, and are

provided with physical, spiritual, and emotional stability to continue their learning journey during the years of their education. To exclude the biased assessment due to a condescending attitude inclusive assessing methods should be used which are options for our further study.

Conclusions

Our study has led us to conclude that the implementation of inclusive education at ESP classes is a complex but effective process that requires much time, resources, awareness, and mutual interest and effort from teachers and students. The result of the introduction of inclusive communicative strategies is raising the social inclusivity responsibility of the university and academic community. For internally displaced students, the introduction of inclusive technologies includes academic gains in English literacy (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), better communication abilities, and improved social and interpersonal skills.

The present study has only examined the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of inclusive communicative strategies. Therefore, this study has not taken into consideration the interrelations between the principles of inclusive education and the advantages or disadvantages of the approach and was not focused on students who didn't leave their homes but studied with IDP.

Future studies on the current topic are therefore required for the investigation of inclusive assessment strategies and their impact on the psychological well-being of internally displaced students.

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APPENDIX

Figure 2

An example of questionnaires proposed to ESP teachers.

Nº	Question	Type of answer
1	I need to attend additional training or webinars to choose proper inclusive technologies to work with internally displaced students	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
2	What challenges to you encounter while teaching internally displaced students?	Open answer
3	What inclusive strategies did you apply?	Open answer
4	The psychological well-being of ID students improved after the usage of inclusive practices	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
5	What advantages can you observe during the implementation of inclusive technologies?	Open answer
6	What challenges can you observe during the implementation of inclusive technologies?	Open answer

Figure 3

An example of questionnaires proposed to internally displaced students.

Nº	Question	Type of answer
1	The relocation affected my study.	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
2	The academic requirements at new university are completely different from the university I studied before	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
3	The foreign language classes helped me adapt and build social networks with peers	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
4	Using foreign language for imaginary situations or discussions makes it easier to express my feelings than in real communication	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
5	Variability of self-expression possibilities at English language classes (audio/video recordings, blogs, vlogs, infographics, portfolios) helped me overcome communication barrier in new learning environment	Strongly Agree – Agree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree
6.	What advantages did you find in completion activities differentiated by levels or possibilities?	Open answer
7	What disadvantages did you find in completion activities differentiated by levels or possibilities?	Open answer

Figure 6

An example of tasks used by an ESP teacher and differentiated by levels

Topic: Open-pit mines and renewable energy

Specialism: Energy management

Instruction: At an interdepartmental meeting, ELEC employees are discussing the future of energy supply. Listen and prepare the report about the future of energy supply.

LEVEL 1

Prepare your report following the next headings.

1 Long-distance electricity transmission

2 R&D department project

3 Geothermal heating

4 Hydrogen

LEVEL 2

Prepare your report using the above headings. The following expressions may help you

The Introduction

The most important points seem to me to be ...

I would like to mention briefly that...

The main body

A case in point is ...

Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ...

The conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that...

LEVEL 3

Prepare your report using the above headings, expressions, and plan below. Ask your teacher about things you are not sure about.

Plan

1. The introduction

Tell your classmates about:

- kind of company;
- energy resources;
- country where it was founded.

2. The main part

Tell your classmates about:

- how the company will work;
- benefits from such work;
- sources of renewable or nonrenewable energy.

3. Conclusion

Tell your classmates about:

- predict the future company.

Figure 7

An example of task used by an ESP teacher and differentiated by function

Topic: Open-pit mines and renewable energy
Specialism: Energy engineers
Instruction: With the help of the Internet find information about Ukrainian and European companies dealing with the latest Renewable energy projects. To present the information you are divided into groups with specific tasks, you can choose the group by filling in the Google form.

GROUP 1 **SECOND** **FIRST**

1. The introduction. **THIRD**

Tell your classmates about:
kind of company;
source where the information was taken;
country where it was founded.

You may use:
The most important points seem to me to be ...
I would like to mention briefly that ...
I would like to make a few remarks concerning...
I would like to comment on the problem of ...

GROUP 2 **FOURTH**

2. The main part.

Tell your classmates about:
how the company will work;
benefits from such work;
sources of renewable energy.

You may use:
A case in point is ...
Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ...
Finally, ...
In addition, ...
Let me give an example ...

GROUP 3

3. Conclusion.

Tell your classmates about:
why did you choose this company;
can a subsidiary of this company be opened in your country?

You may use:
In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that...
Let me conclude by saying...
Allow me to conclude by highlighting the fact that...

You may use the following websites as well as your own, which you will find.
<http://www.enertec.fi/company/10557/companycard.html>
http://www.flexlink.com/wps/public/s/10000/c/3225372?gclid=CLyI2_Dcg50CFQYTzAodrWX76w
www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/solutions/renewable_energy_solutions/cashing-in-on-clean-energy-a.html
http://gradschool.cat.org.uk/graduateschool/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=149&Itemid=213&gclid=CL701bnCG50CFVITzAodWjtNbg