

The Russian "NTID": Part 2

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In Part 1, we explored the history of Russia's Bauman University, which has been educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students since 1934. It is not a University exclusively for the deaf as such (as some of you might have assumed already), but a mainstream University that devotes a great deal of attention to the higher education of the deaf.

So what are the secrets that made education in Bauman's University for the deaf so popular?

The power of technology

Center for the Deaf provides individual consultations, training for psychological comfort and communication skills development, and speech development classes. They strive for an individual approach to every student; for example, a first year student said: "At school, I rarely remember that I am deaf," while a 2nd year student reaffirms the trend: "We are all disabled according to our documents, but we do not feel like we are disabled." Much of this is because of technology used in the school coupled with respectful attitude from the staff and their belief in deaf students' abilities.



The "active board" used in class

For example, the "Active board" is a screen with a multimedia projector and voting (testing) system. This allows the instructor to write on the board, and the image is simultaneously transferred to deaf students' computers. Files with images on the board can be saved on computer and disks. Images

Source: Deafnet.ru

from a personal computer can also be projected on active board for the class presentation. This novelty became a talk of the town.

Apart from other classes, this "active board" is used for explaining English Grammar and developing language skills. They're also developing methodology for teaching English to deaf students: in 2002 members of the Bauman MSTU faculty traveled to NTID for training on "English as a Second Language for Deaf Students at the University Level."

About the Author



Karina Chupina is a freelance international trainer, consultant and writer from St.Petersburg, Russia. Karina became interested in international matters and writing during the year she spent at an America high school in Tecumseh, MI, while participating in a student exchange program. She went on to earn an M.A. in International Journalism.

Karina has authored articles on themes of disability, minority participation, mass media, human rights education, culture and social inclusion. She is the only trainer with a disability in the international Trainers' Pool of the Council of Europe Youth Sector (www.coe.int/youth).

Karina is deeply involved with local disability youth organisation and IFHOHYP, the [International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People](#), and serves as its President. She has been project leader for several of such international disability projects and training programs, including "Integration through Arts and Education", "Disability and Sport", "How to Make a Campaign on Hearing Disability", "Building Communication for Hard of Hearing

In the future, the School hopes to create a global network based on the Center which will enable all deaf and hard-of-hearing students to study online with professors from abroad.



Sign language interpretation and hearing aids are sometimes still not enough. A new technology device was developed by Bauman University experts to assist deaf students. A professor wears a tiny video camera on his head (see picture) that allows students to see the professor's face and lip movements on screen or a student's personal computer while a professor can freely move across classroom. The school also uses mirrors on top of classroom boards for reading the lecturer's lips.

Source: Deafnet.ru

To make learning of technical terminology easier - including special terms translated from English - the sign language dictionary includes a special section about Pascal programming language for the engineering terms.

No wonder deaf and hard-of-hearing students from all over Russia, and even other CIS countries, dream of entering this University! This is the only higher education institution in Russia fully equipped and adapted to the needs of the deaf people. Many deaf or hard of hearing students still often have to study in mainstream universities where obtaining interpreters' help or other assistance is extremely difficult.

Perspectives for the students

According to government statistics there are 13 million deaf or hard-of-hearing people in Russia, and only 10% of them are employed. Graduates of Bauman MSTU show a stark contrast to this overall trend: all graduates over the past eight years found jobs independently. I heard that several companies' Human Resources departments are competing to employ deaf Bauman University graduates. Given the public's prevailing negative stereotype or ignorance about Russian deaf persons, this is an amazing achievement. It signals a positive tendency for people with disabilities - turning from passive consumers to active partners in professional and social spheres. To help employment, the Center signs contracts with the Federal Employment Service and Central Bank for employing deaf graduates, and they fully compensate Russia for all funding spent on the education. The best graduates can also enter PhD programmes and continue scientific research.

Want an example? Dmitry Timoshenko, a professional programmer and Bauman University graduate received his first invitation to an interview after half a year of job-hunting. He sent hundreds of resumes to various

Youth: Breaking Down Barriers and Stereotypes," the Russian Deaf Art Exhibits and more.

Currently Karina is studying "International and European Relations & Management" at the University of Amsterdam and in her free time, enjoys carefree bicycling across the canals, and dancing.

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companies where he always indicated that he was deaf. Dmitry hardly imagined at the time that he would be able to work in groups and take part in project discussions. But everything worked out. He and the company staff came to a mutual understanding - surely, not overnight, but over the course of time. Today, Dmitry is a website developer for several large Western companies. Incidentally, he is also the developer of the most popular website portal for hard of hearing and the deaf people in Russia - www.deafnet.ru.

Indeed, what can be better than a technically adept, focused deaf employee, who is not easily distracted by colleagues, and who does not waste time on pointless phone chatting?

The USA is impressed

While Bauman stands out, the U.S. is considered to maintain the lead with its education system for people with disabilities. There are about 120 programmes for deaf people alone, and nearly 15,000 students enrolled.

Russians are astounded at the large amount of deaf students who study in higher educational institutions simultaneously. But, Americans are surprised by Russian experience and highly educated certified MA deaf and hard-of-hearing experts.

Bauman University graduates, despite their hearing loss, are welcome in the prestigious Russian and foreign companies, they successfully work in defense laboratories and at scientific research institutes, and within aerospace enterprises.

Experts on deaf education from Russia and the U.S. work in close contact. Russian ideas on Bauman University's education for deaf people have been picked up by the higher educational institutions in the U.S., Japan, China, The Philippines, Thailand, Korea and The Czech Republic.

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