

Differentiated or “Individual” Teaching for Children with Special Needs, now a Necessary Reality Even in Albanian Education

Ambera Duka

*Department of Pedagogy / FE, University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, Albania
e-mail: ambaduka@yahoo.com*

Ermira Tati

*Department of English Language / FE, University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, Albania
e-mail: sterlatati@yahoo.com*

Abstract The goal of this research is to treat the necessity of the differentiated teaching in the included classes. Mostly based on the skills and needs of the children with special needs it places the teaching method on individual bases. This study will be a qualitative study .Its data are collected from the observations and interviews with the teachers of the primary schools in our city Durres. From the figures received by the Local Education Authority in Durres it is noticeable that there is a vast growth of the numbers of the pupils with special needs year by year. The opinions and suggestions given ,which do not pretend to be the solution of the problems for differentiated teaching , but it is hopeful to influence more or less on the lessen of the problems. Practice has shown that with a persistent work and the collaboration of all , on the condition that every difficulty can be undergone successfully though it may seem unsolveable.

Key words : Differentiated teaching ,children with special needs, Individual Plan of Education included classes.

Introduction

The include education means the inclusion of all the children in normal schools , where the education is taught according to needs. The included education has its beginnings in the years 80s of the previous century , and it is progressing with rapid steps nowadays. It is replacing the traditional education that was represented by a sole system separated in two components : the usual system and the special system (currently it is narrowing more and more). The children with special needs not always have got difficulties in learning , but as a rule they are educated in special schools according to their disabilities. Most of the children with special needs in the education process consist of children with difficulties in learning , and a part of them can be considered as children with limited intellectual (cognitive) abilities and disorders in behavior.

In the 20th century the special schools were considered as the only possibility to teach children with special needs. At present the mostly dominated thought is that the children with special needs are like the others and for this reason they must be taught in the same classes and schools , with the support that they need. As a result , the gap between the normal education and that special should be smaller and at the same time it is necessary to be replaced with a single system , that intrude all the pupils.

The goal and the objectives :

The main goal of this research is :

- to contribute in the consciousness and the promotion of the new practices and experience towards a contemporary teaching on the point of the included education .

As the specific objective :

- To analyze the current practice on the differentiated teaching in the included classes
- To identify the problems in the included classes because of the lack of usage of the PEI , (Individual Plan of Education) and the necessity of the usage of the PEI.

Methodology

In this research there are adapted the research strategies mostly qualitative but combined with the quantitative ones. This strategy gives a hand to make a profound analysis of the answers of the interviewed (teachers of the Lower Level , parents , the headmasters of the schools)towards a numbers of issues that are connected with the differentiated teaching in included classes.

The goal of the analysis gathered statistics is to describe , to discuss to evaluate and to explain the meaningful role of the differentiated teaching in included classes.

The two dominant features due to the gathered statistics is the fact that they are both systematic and included.

The usage of these statistics , the elaborating of the topics in details and later the analyzing of the links among these statistics make it possible the creation of a typology . the theme analysis that means the segmentation of the process , the categorization and the reconnection of the given aspects before their final interpretation. (Grbich,2007;16), and this fact make the analysis easier.

The interviewed are especially part of the classes where the observations are performed and mostly , classes of the Lower Level (Cl I-V).The teachers of these classes are the direct persons that face the difficulties of the differentiated teaching every day. (or individual teaching) that these children need. This type of teaching should be based on the needs and the abilities of the pupils.

This process has to answer these questions.:

- Are the teachers enough prepared to perform an individual teaching and suitable with the needs and the abilities of these children?
- Are the multidisciplinary commissions necessary to define the needs of these children to learn?
- Do the Albanian schools have special teachers as main supporters of a more specialized teaching and to collaborate with the tasks of other teachers?

The included education

It is widely spoken and discussed on the included education. Its concept derives from a narrow view like : *the included education* is considered as “ an attempt to educate people with intellectual disabilities and involving them near the proper units of the educational system ”, (Michailakis & Rech, 2009) up to a wider view like : the intruded education is considered “a leading principle to support the education for all the educational systems that profit from the diversity which aims the establishment of a society simply more democratic.” (Acedo, 2008).

The included education in a wider view is understood as a process by means of which the school should try to meet the needs of all the students as individual , accepting and including them in the educational process though they are different.

Inclusion in its broad meaning , is the process of the increasing of the participation and at the same time the decreasing of the excluding , which means that with participation is understood the knowledge, the acceptance and the respect for all , the involvement in the learning process as well as the participation in the social activities , and it is important to mention that this has to do with the insurance of the individual development , the feeling that they are part of this world.

The system of the included education which does not involve a wide variety of pupils , but at the same time it differentiate the education due to this variety.

The difference between the concept “integration ” and “inclusion” is very important.

The inclusion is a wider concept than integration , even though integration is an attempt towards the inclusion of the children with special needs in the general educational system, but we can point out that it is not the same with the inclusion.

Different authors (Soder, 1991; Jordan and Poeell, 1994; Meijer, Pilj dhe Hegarty, 1997(1) emphasize that integration is performed after the selection , which is a way to avoid it.

The integration can result as an attempt to suit the general educational program , meeting the requirements of the pupils with special needs., but this is not enough if we want to implement inclusion. In the worst case , the integration leads only to the physical presence of the children with special needs in the normal schools . (unfortunately as it usually happens these days in the classes observed.)

But integration should not be simply the replacement of the pupils from special schools to normal schools and at the same time it is not considerable the matching of these children with special needs towards the schools but it should be the matching of the school with the needs of these pupils.

The term included education is used more and more in our country, but mostly it is meant as *integration* rather than *inclusion* of the pupils with special needs in normal schools. Inclusion means not only the physical presence in the class. Inclusion means belonging and it is understood as a fact that pupils with special needs belong to the whole community of the students in the school, and participate emotionally in this community and are accepted by the others as equal. Special classes inside the normal schools (such as the model of the so-called school "Maliq Muço" of Durresi, October 1974), are the examples of the integration. While the involvement of the pupils with special needs in normal classes, without collaboration of other pupils, is not the right case with that of integration.

The advantages of the included classes

- The pupils of the normal schools are a great help for the academic achievement of the pupils with special needs.
- The normal pupils, with the assistance of the teachers are very helpful for the pupils with special needs.
- A pupil in the included classes offers greater help to a pupil with special needs regarding his cooperation and coteaching as well.
- The coexisting in the school with the children with special needs, teaches the others human values which are essential for the social coexistence such as :

Compassion, sympathy and solidarity.

Besides pupils, the included education is useful even for the teachers, as though it makes them be conscious for their crucial role in the civic formation of all the children.

Hence, the education of the children should be overall, in this way the children raised together, learnt to coexist like the adults and perform common tasks

Furthermore the included education has its long termed impact not only in the academic formation, but in the psychosocial development and the prosperity of the children as well. (Landgren, Kjellman, Gillberg, 2003)

Disadvantages of the included classes

Warnock-s (2005), emphasizes that in the included education can be found negative consequences for the children with special needs as they feel:

- Excluded by their peers, (influence of the parents), while in small special schools they are involved and they undergo the feeling of pertains that is very necessary for them. , (p15).
- Yet, Warnock-s (2005), defends the idea that special education is favorable especially for children with Autism and behavior disorders. These schools satisfy the specific needs of the children better than the normal schools.

Recommendations

By the analysis of the observations and the interviews with the teachers of the lower level is necessary to mention some suggestions:

1- Advice for the teachers

- Find out as much as possible about the contemporary methods and techniques that are more productive for the education of the pupils with special needs.
- Give them more time to accomplish their duties in school
- Show them the steps to perform a task
- Create a sustainable routine. This helps them to realise what they expect if the daily routine changes.
- Verify if the pupil has learnt the new attitudes, give them more possibilities to accomplish these tasks themselves

2- **Advice for the parents**

- Learn more about “restricted abilities”.the more you know the better you can help your child and yourself to deal with his or her disabilities.
 - Work with the team (teacher ,psychologist, doctor etc), to understand the changes that the child undergoes
 - Don't be ashamed to ask .Tell them (teacher, psychologist and doctor ,) what you think and what you know;
 - Speculate ;
 - Follow the treatment of your child ;
 - Talk with other parents that have got children with special needs;
 - Parents can share practical advice ,emotional support;
- 3- Enquire the school to test your child constantly and periodically to see the achievement

4- **What should the teacher foresee in the composition of the Individual Planl:**

- To define the short termed objective for the child;
- To define the temporal decline to achieve this objective
- To define the methods that the teachers should use;
- The define the aspect it will involve;
- To define the materials that will be used to accomplish their objectives
- To verify the work performed in the achievement of this objective set by PEI.
- To conclude on the work done in order to correct the observed lackness and design the task for the future.

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