

STUDIES ON INTEGRATED EDUCATION STRATEGIES IN SPECIAL SECONDARY EDUCATION IN RURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This paper aims to report significant aspects of the integration of students with special educational needs in schools with agronomic profile and to identify possible correlations between changes in school integration and educational support services provided. The research has an ascertaining character, proposing as objectives: establishing the initial development level of 10 students, with special educational needs, individually integrated in schools with agronomic profile, on specific fields: psychomotor field, communication and language field and social-affective field (social-affective maturation); establishing the level of final development of the 10 students with special educational needs integrated individually in schools with agronomic profile, on specific areas of development; formulating suggestions regarding the increase of the effectiveness of the educational support programs, granted to the students with special educational needs integrated in schools with agronomic profile, through the educational support program. The research aimed at analyzing the individual path of each child included in the support program and evaluating changes in skills acquired during the school year, following the provision of educational support, compared to the level established by the initial assessment. Taking into account the results of the final assessment we designed the main solutions that can be applied for the integration of students with special needs in schools with an agronomic profile.

Key words: special educational, school integration, educational support programs, psychomotor field, communication and language field, social-affective field

INTRODUCTION

People with special needs are in the delicate situation of dealing with the surrounding reality in the presence of a wide repertoire of difficulties. These range from difficulties in decoding language to conditions that affect the essential ways of reception and communication. Children with special needs are the category with the highest degree of vulnerability [5]. Having a personality in formation, in full structuring and evolution, they particularly assimilate the special situation they face: without support they decompensate chaotically - with support they can outline the path to optimal adaptation [7]. Contemporary society has marked a series of developments in mentalities related to people with special

needs. Thus, if in the traditional school students with special educational needs were placed in segregated units, being considered unrecoverable or uneducable, the current educational and societal system is much more flexible, prepared as if to cope with the avalanche of human diversity [3]. The school for all, through integrated education, is the modern replica of the socio-educational approach of children with special needs, an approach that puts at the center of the stated strategies the best interest of the child and from this point aims to design inclusive educational environments in which each student is supported in gaining autonomy in its own development [1, 4].

The present paper aims, through the issue of approach, to highlight the particular aspects, significant for the school integration strategies of students with special educational needs.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

For conducting the research, 10 students with special educational needs were selected, from the ninth grade, at risk of dropping out of school and who were not integrated in support services and included experimentally in the support program during September 2018-June 2019.

The basis for inclusion in the educational support program facilitated by the educational support program provided by the support teacher and the use of inclusive methods and strategies at school level (differentiated and individualized methods used in the teaching-learning-assessment process), facilitating access and adapting resources (workshops, laboratories, farms, experimental groups) to the particularities of students with special educational needs, training of human resource in inclusive education, the efficiency of interdisciplinary teams in facilitating the integration of students with special educational needs in research, were the proposals made by teachers in the classroom and the complex evaluations performed.

The subjects were observed and evaluated initially and finally, from the point of view of psycho-behavioral peculiarities, with reference to the 3 areas of development and the school results obtained within the piloted educational support program.

In the organization and development of the proposed investigative approaches we started from the methodological recommendations presented by the authors Coca Vasiliu and Daniela Gurgu, in the book "Complex assessment of children with special educational needs" (Iasi, 2006) [6], adapted to research objectives, which propose as a benchmark central, in approaching students with special educational needs, the assessment process, providing support services and collaboration within the interdisciplinary team.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Special education is an adapted form of school training and complex assistance (medical, educational, social, and cultural) for people who fail to reach temporarily or

throughout schooling the age-appropriate instructional-educational levels required by regular education. The school education of children with special educational needs must correspond to the developmental needs of children, by adequately assessing the learning/development potential and by ensuring the rehabilitation/recovery and compensation of deficiencies or disorders, learning difficulties.

Alois Gherguț considers necessary the relative distinction between integration and inclusion based mainly on socio - school criteria [2]. Thus, the integration supposes the focusing of the approaches on the student, the complex, multifactorial and personalized evaluation, the reporting to a specific category, the elaboration of some personalized intervention programs and the placement of the child in adequate programs. The inclusion refers to the focus of the interventions on the production of changes at the class/school level: changes of attitude, empowerment of teachers in the issue of students with disabilities, promotion and respect for children's rights, collaboration and partnership, diversity, support services for all students, etc. The two approaches re-signify and reframe the mission of educational institutions, their obligation to provide a wide range of educational services appropriate to the specifics of each child.

Integrated education is a process of adapting the child to the requirements of the school he attends, of establishing positive emotional relationships with the members of the school group and of the successful development of school services.

The research had an ascertaining character, following the comparative analysis of the changes, at the level of 3 development areas, respectively the school results in the case of the 10 students with special educational needs integrated individually in the mainstream school, as an effect of inclusion in the educational support program.

Based on the recommendations regarding the level of difficulties faced by the subjects included in the research, the evaluation grids were applied, for the 3 areas of development and school results.

The results obtained, through the individual application of the evaluation grids, were centralized in the form of a centralizing evaluation grid, for each student included in the research.

In the interpretation of the results were considered 2 criteria:

- ✓ the score obtained at the 2 evaluations, compared to the maximum possible score obtained at the level of the evaluation grid (the maximum score on the grid is obtained by awarding 4 points to each item in the grid - eg: 4 points x 61 items = 244 points) ;
- ✓ the marks awarded to the 2 evaluations - correlations were established between the frequency of high marks and the level of adaptation to the high school environment

with agronomic profile, established following the initial and final evaluations, as follows:

- 5 and 6 - increased risk of school maladjustment
- 7 and 8 - average risk of school maladjustment
- 9 and 10 - low risk of school maladjustment

The results obtained from the 2 assessments (initial and final) were analyzed, interpreted and organized statistically and graphically for each of the 10 students as in the following example (table 1).

In the case of the student T.C. the evaluation grids were applied for the fields of psychomotor skills, communication and language, social-affective maturation and the school documents were analyzed.

Table 1 Centralized evaluation grid, by areas:

Name and surname of the student: T.C. Grade: IX Age: 15 years

<i>Evaluated domain Total scores</i>	<i>Initial evaluation</i>	<i>Final evaluation</i>
Motor - psychomotor skills	139	203
Communication and language	121	192
Socio - affective maturation	39	61
School results	5.60	9.40

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From a psycho-pedagogical point of view, the results of the initial evaluation highlighted a series of specific difficulties:

- ✓ psychomotor field - coordination difficulties in performing complex tasks, difficulties in supporting activities that require additional effort.
- ✓ communication and language field - difficulties in acquiring new terms and complex notions specific to the field, weak ability to sustain a dialogue, low active vocabulary, difficulties in complying with grammatical rules.
- ✓ the field of socio-affective maturation - communication and relationship difficulties,

behavioral inhibitions, low initiative at the level of student-student, student-adult relationship, poor ability to understand group norms.

From a statistical point of view, the results of the final evaluation highlighted the progress made as a result of the inclusion of the student in the educational support program.

Motor field - psychomotor skills:

- ✓ at the initial evaluation the student T.C. obtained a total score of 139 points, out of 244 total points / grid, respectively 57% of the maximum total score obtained on the grid (maximum score on the grid is obtained by awarding 4 points to each item in the grid: 4 points x 61 items = 244 points);
- ✓ at the final evaluation the total score was 203 points, out of 244 total points / grid, respectively 83% of the maximum total score obtained

Considering the frequency of the scores obtained at the two evaluations, the level of special educational requirements was established as follows:

✓ at the initial evaluation the scores of 2 (69%) and 3 (29%) predominated, which reflects an average risk of maladjustment to school tasks;

✓ at the final evaluation the scores of 3 (62%) and 4 (35%) predominated, which reflects (based on the interpretation of the frequency of points awarded / item set) a significant improvement in the difficulties identified at psychomotor level - low risk of maladjustment at school assignments.

Communication and language:

✓ at the initial evaluation the student T.C. obtained a total score of 120 points, out of 204 total points / grid, respectively 59% of the maximum total score obtained on the grid (maximum score on the grid is obtained by awarding 4 points to each item in the grid: 4 points x 51 items = 204 points).

✓ at the final evaluation the total score was 192 points, out of 204 total points / grid, respectively 94% of the maximum total score to be obtained on the grid.

Considering the frequency of the scores obtained at the 2 evaluations, the level of special educational requirements was established as follows:

✓ at the initial evaluation, the scores of 2 (59%) and 3 (39%) predominated, which reflects an average risk of maladjustment to school tasks;

✓ at the final evaluation the scores of 4 (76%) predominated, which reflects (based on the established score) a significant improvement at the level of the difficulties identified at the level of communication and language - low risk of maladjustment to school tasks.

The field of social-affective maturation:

✓ at the initial evaluation the student T.C. obtained a total score of 39 points, out of 72 total points / grid, respectively 54% of the maximum total score obtained on the grid (maximum score on the grid is obtained by awarding 4 points to each item in the grid: 4 points x 18 items = 72 points).

✓ at the final evaluation the total score was 61 points, out of 72 total points / grid, respectively 84% of the maximum total score to be obtained on the grid.

Considering the frequency of the scores obtained at the 2 evaluations, the level of special educational requirements was established as follows:

✓ the initial evaluation was dominated by scores of 2 (83%), which reflects an average risk of maladjustment to school tasks in the field of social and emotional maturation;

✓ at the final evaluation the scores of 3 (61%) and 4 (39%) predominated, which reflects (based on the established score) a significant improvement at the level of the difficulties identified in the field of social-affective maturation - low risk of maladjustment to school tasks.

Analyzing the presented results, we find:

✓ the ascending evolution, as number of points awarded and percentage of the type of point awarded to each item, evolution that can be attributed to the effects produced by the inclusion of the child in the support program;

✓ if at the initial evaluation 66% of the completed items received scores of 2 (which means a high degree of difficulties faced by the student in the development areas concerned), at the final evaluation, after inclusion in the educational support program, 51% of the items received scores of 4, and 47% received scores of 3 (which means a significant improvement in difficulties compared to the level identified in the initial assessment);

✓ ranking of development areas, in terms of progress made after inclusion in the support program:

- the field of socio-affective maturation (45%), followed by:
- communication and language (36%)
- psychomotor skills (26%).

The working methodology (analysis, processing and presentation of the results obtained through the 2 evaluations), used in the case of the student T.C., was applied similarly for the other 9 students involved in the research, and the results obtained are presented globally in the tables and graphs below.

Table 2 shows the total scores obtained (sum of points awarded for the 3 areas of development) and the averages obtained from the two evaluations.

Table 2 Scores / averages obtained after the evaluation

Ord. no.	Student	Initial evaluation/ Score / Average	Final evaluation Score / Average
1	T.C.	299/5.60	456/9.40
2	S.I.	291/5.45	453/9.35
3	S.E.	288/5.40	446/9.28
4	D.A.	281/5.38	441/9.15
5	R.G.	277/5.33	437/9.05
6	D.S.	271/5.28	434/8.92
7	M.S.	264/5.20	427/8.85
8	Z.R.	258/5.17	418/8.60
9	D.D.	251/5.15	410/8.45
10	C.L.	243/5.10	400/8.20

Given the differences found between the results of the initial and final evaluation, we can support the confirmation of the general hypothesis from which it started. Therefore, students with special educational needs, included individually in the support program, make significant progress in the fields of communication and language, social and emotional maturation, psychomotor skills and school progress, as a result of the application of integrative methods and strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

In the broad context of theorizing the concept of quality in education, it is necessary to establish clear benchmarks to increase the effectiveness of educational support programs for students with special educational needs integrated into mainstream schooling.

Concretizing, with relevance for the research, some clarifications are necessary, in order to emphasize the aspects that competed in obtaining the presented results:

✓ the real collaboration and communication between specialized teachers, leading

teachers, master instructors ensured the fluidization and adaptation on the fly of the strategies used, both at the class level and in the specialized laboratories;

✓ the interventions of the specialized teachers / foremen had an increased influence first of all on the difficulties in terms of communication and social-affective maturation; the progress registered in the amelioration of these types of difficulties increases the chances of socio-school integration by developing the communication tools and the capacity of relationship within the group;

✓ at the class level, the teachers used, as a support point in the transmission of the contents to be assimilated, the mediation elements offered by the volunteer support teacher (communication techniques, ways of organizing the contents, behavior management strategies);

✓ the presence of the volunteer support teacher in the classroom was imposed in the activities with complex and new elements, whose level exceeded the set of acquisitions available to students with special educational needs;

✓ the training of the other members of the teaching staff determined their increased involvement in mediating the communication and relationship between the students with special educational needs and the other students;

✓ in the case of many students with special educational needs, the family environment has a dysfunctional specificity (poverty and precarious education), an aspect that negatively influences the students' involvement in school activity;

✓ dissemination of information on the specifics of support services leads to the elimination of the effect of false segregation - many students refusing inclusion to avoid stigma.

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