

EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN INTO A PRIMARY REGULAR SCHOOL: PROJECT EVALUATION

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In Slovenia we can find different levels of implementation of integration forms into the teaching practice, both regarding the strategies of integration as well as professional and financial solutions. The present article introduces the project of Integration of Hearing Impaired Children into a Regular Primary School in Maribor, currently running under the supervision of the Slovene Board of Education and Sport. The project of Integration did not lead to any negative effects on the hearing pupils of the first grade who were taught together with their hearing impaired peers. The level of their knowledge is comparable to the knowledge of the first graders with no integrated pupils. But the differences occurred among the hearing impaired pupils on their higher acquired levels of motivational, social and emotional integration.

Keywords: *Hearing impaired children, integration, evaluation, mainstreaming*

Introduction

Slovenia recently faced some global changes - like the establishment of an independent state and the introduction of a multi-party system in particular - which led to some changes in instruction and education. The fact that we followed the recommendations of UNESCO, European Union, numerous professional, humanitarian, national and international associations, resulted in an increased integration of children with special needs into regular kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and also universities. The new Slovene educational legislation - Compulsory Education Law (1996) and The Law of counseling children with special needs (2000) both provide the formal legal grounds to create formal grounds for the educational integration of the children with special needs.

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teaching practice, both regarding the strategies of integration as well as professional and financial solutions. From the point of view of the present state of education in our country, as far as the conditions are concerned, we can say that the integration is demanding and not yet perfected at the conceptual level (Galeša, 1997, Skalar, 1999). This is the reason the integration is introduced gradually into those schools that have the required personnel, appropriate premises, financial means etc. and we do that within the framework of projects.

Researchers in numerous countries have proved that integration is very common, but there are still many obstacles that prevent both the inclusion and acceptance of children with special needs on the whole. Authors of many studies (Pijl, Meijer, 1991; Ainscow, Haile-Giorgis, 1999) emphasise the fact that it is much more demanding to accomplish (realize) social than curricular integration, and they enumerate the

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