

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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Since 1980 there has been a law requiring educational integration in the Republic of Croatia, yet, to date the results have not been satisfactory. Successful realisation of this process depends a lot on teachers and their readiness to accept children with developmental difficulties, as well as to create the most suitable individualised educational approaches. Since a lot of results obtained in other countries indicate unfavourable teachers' attitudes, the aim of this study was to investigate regular primary school teachers' attitudes towards children with intellectual disabilities and their integration into regular primary schools in the Republic of Croatia. The Lickert type attitude inventory, "Attitudes toward Integration", consisting of 21 items with a 5 level acceptance scale, was applied on the same sample of 194 teachers. Five attitude factors were isolated, showing significant attitude differences between groups of subjects, in terms of sex, age, educational level and employment period in the regular primary school. The obtained results show the need for additional teacher education, to develop the acceptance of intellectually disabled pupils.

key words: educational integration, children with intellectual disabilities, attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Educational integration was legalised in the Republic of Croatia in 1980 by the Law of Up-bringing and Primary Education, which brought the possibility of full and partial integration to children with development difficulties. Croatia has slightly less than 5 million inhabitants, with 428,000 primary school pupils. The results of the State Statistical Institute show that only 4,416 pupils with development difficulties are integrated in the regular school system (a little over 1%), the majority of whom are children with intellectual disabilities. However, professionals familiar with the educational situation in Croatia disagree with these figures, stating that a considerably higher number of pupils in regular education require additional help, but are not registered.

Although over 15 years have passed since the legal regulation, a number of subjective, objective and organisational demands have not been met. The recent political situation has also put great strain on the integrational work, and the process of integration in Croatia is still not satisfactory.

A great role in integration is attributed to teachers, as the successful realisation of this process greatly depends on their readiness to accept children with development difficulties and to find the most adequate methods of up-bringing and education (Mavrin-Cavor, Levandovski, 1991; Mustač,

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Vicić, 1996; Levin, 1992; Villa, Thousand, 1992; Thousand, Villa, Nevin, 1994; Lewis, Doorlag, 1987).

The success of pupils with development difficulties in integration conditions thus depends on the professional competence of the teachers, but also on their opinions toward children with development difficulties and especially towards their integration. Muth, for example, when stating the conditions for integration, in 1977, stresses the request that "special pedagogy" topics be included in teachers' curricula. Muth feels that the goal of integration cannot be achieved if the teachers are not familiar with the problems of children with development difficulties, their specific needs and education potential, the nature of their disability, and the didactic possibilities for integrated education of pupils with and without difficulties.

Unfortunately, a number of authors still stress that the teachers' competence for working with pupils with development difficulties is inadequate and insufficient (Tomas, 1992; Atkin, Bastiani, 1985; Stierer, 1985; Strain, Kerrs, 1981; Sekulić-Majurec, 1983). Lyon, Vaassen and Toomey (1989) even state that as many as 80% of teachers feel that their education has not sufficiently prepared them for work with pupils with development difficulties.

Accepting attitudes as behaviour determinants, a number of authors in the world and in Croatia have dedicated themselves to the analysis of teachers' attitudes towards the integration of pupils with development difficulties in regular schools and the level of influence these attitudes have on the integrated situation (Cartledge, Frew, Zaharias, 1985; Garrett, Crump, 1980; Simpson, Sekulić-Majurec, 1983). A great part of the research results show unfavourable attitudes of teachers (Shotel, Iano, McGettingan, 1972; Harasimiw, Horne, 1986; Stančić, Mejovšek, 1982; Štević-Vuković, 1986). The researchers interpret these results through negative attitudes in the general population or through the teachers' being

insufficiently informed. Other authors feel that a number of factors influence the attitudes of teachers, such as the characteristics and physical appearance of the child (Rose, Salvia, 1975; after Fulgosi-Masnjak, 1989), the teacher's characteristics (Shotel, Iano, McGettingan, 1972), awareness of the child's IQ (Beez, 1971; Pelliguini, Hicks, 1972; after McEvoy, Nordquist, Cunningham, 1984), the extent to which the child is accepted by its peers (Corman, Gottlieb, 1978; after Fulgosi-Masnjak, 1989), etc.

The results of the research projects on attitudes of regular school teachers toward children with development difficulties and their educational integration in Croatia, carried out before the process of integration had been launched, show that a considerable percentage of teachers does not have a positive attitude toward integration (Stančić, Mejovšek, 1982; Sekulić-Majurec, 1983; Stančić, Z., 1989). There are, however, differences in teachers' attitudes toward different types of development difficulties (Štević-Vuković, 1986) and the attitudes are most positive toward children with intellectual disabilities. Levandovski (1982) points out that teachers in regular schools tend to have unrealistic estimates of their pupils' educational potential, which can perhaps explain these attitudes and show the need for adequate teacher training.

Stressing the importance of teachers' attitudes, Harling, Stein and Cruichshank (after McEvoy, Nordquist, Cunningham, 1984) as early as 1957 pointed out, that the attitudes of teachers toward children with development difficulties not only influence the efficiency of the process of integration, but also the intellectual, social and emotional development of children. So it seems necessary that, in creating the conditions for integration, the teachers' attitudes should be modified toward better acceptance of children with development difficulties. This still does not mean that the integration should wait until the attitudes of every teacher becomes optimal, as "the integration itself changes teacher attitudes" (Muth, 1977).

Objective

The object of this work is to state the attitudes of teachers in regular schools in Croatia toward children with development difficulties and toward their integration in regular education.

It must be stressed that this is the first investigation of this kind after 15 years of teachers' experience of the integration of these pupils.

METHODS

Sample of participants

The sample consists of 194 teachers from 17 regular primary schools in the city of Zagreb and in the surrounding area. The teachers selected each have one or more pupils with development difficulties. The teachers are of both sexes (23 males and 171 females), range in age from 23 to 64 and have worked in regular primary school from 1 to 30 years. There are both class and subject teachers, with either higher or university education.

Measuring instruments, variables and data collecting

General data about the participant teachers were collected - sex, age, education level, work experience and position. Apart from that, the teachers were given a questionnaire entitled a Attitudes Toward Integration, which was composed for this project, and the instruction was given by a trained examiner. The questionnaire inventory consists of 21 statements, each with 5 acceptance levels, determined by the following answers: I agree completely, I mostly agree, I cannot decide, I mostly disagree, I completely disagree.

The statements can be grouped in 4 hypothetical categories:

1. Attitudes toward pupils with development difficulties - variables 7, 10 and 12
2. Attitudes toward integration of pupils with development difficulties - variables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12 and 13

3. Familiarity with the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties - variables 8, 18, 19, 20 and 21
4. Teacher's readiness for personal engagement in the task of improvement of the integration process - variables 6, 14, 15, 16 and 17

The statements are the following

1. A regular school can supply to pupils with development difficulties every benefit provided by the special education schools.
2. It would be best if all of the pupils with development difficulties attended special education schools.
3. The pupils with development difficulties have a negative influence on the normal work in class.
4. The pupils with development difficulties can have a bad influence on the progress of the entire class.
5. The integration of pupils with development difficulties in regular classes of the regular primary school is beneficial to their progress.
6. The pupils in regular education can be prepared to accept pupils with development difficulties in a reasonable and friendly way.
7. In a lot of ways, pupils with development difficulties are equal to pupils without development difficulties.
8. Some pupils with development difficulties can be more successful in school than a many pupils without development difficulties.
9. Socialising with other pupils in regular primary school is more beneficial to pupils with development difficulties than socialising with pupils with development difficulties in special education school.
10. Pupils without development difficulties can have pupils with development difficulties for friends.
11. In regular primary school, pupils with development difficulties will be molested by their peers without development difficulties.

12. Teachers have to be more benevolent toward pupils with development difficulties.
13. Pupils with development difficulties can learn more in regular primary school than in special education.
14. Regular primary schools can be completely prepared for accepting pupils with development difficulties.
15. I find that I can work with pupils with development difficulties in my class.
16. To work with pupils with development difficulties, one would have to have additional training in special education.
17. Regular primary schools need special education professionals who are trained for work with pupils with development difficulties.
18. The majority of pupils with development difficulties can, with the help of special education professionals, successfully complete a regular curriculum, in regular classes of regular school.
19. The majority of pupils with development difficulties can complete successfully adapted curriculum, in regular classes of regular school.
20. The majority of pupils with development difficulties can successfully complete a part of the regular curriculum in regular classes of regular school, and the other part in special classes.
21. The majority of pupils with development difficulties can complete curriculum successfully in special classes of regular school.

These statements, in addition to the general data on teachers, form the variables in this work.

Data processing methods

Factor and discriminant analyses were used in data processing.

RESULTS

Factor analysis on the questionnaire "Attitudes toward integration" (ATI)

The factor analysis of the collected answers shows the following results:

For the factor extraction in the space of monitored variables the Guttman-Kaiser criterion was used, and the 21 variable space was reduced to the total of 5 components (shown in Table 1.) explaining 58% of the total variance of the system.

The significant components have been transformed in Varimax position and an orthoblique method transformation has been made. A correlation of the variables and of each of the 5 factors is shown in Table 2.

It must be mentioned that the data are coded so that the lower results show more positive and higher more negative attitudes.

As it can be observed in Table 2, variables 13, 14, 9, 19, 5, 15, 1 and 2 have the greatest role in structuring factor 1. The majority of the variables are related to the teachers' attitudes toward integration (variables 1, 2, 5, 9 and 13), more specifically to the advantages of regular up-bringing and education for the general progress of pupils with development difficulties. Variables 14 and 15 are related to the teachers' readiness for work with pupils with development difficulties, as well as the possibilities of the

varijable	eigenvalue	cumulative variance	% of total variance
1	6.66245	6.66245	31.72595
2	1.65923	8.32167	39.62702
3	1.50821	9.82989	46.80898
4	1.21137	11.04125	52.57741
5	1.10906	12.15032	57.85865

Table 1. Factor analysis on the questionnaire "Attitudes toward integration"

factor/varijable	1	2	3	4	5
1	.6468	.6639	-.4152	.5013	.1873
2	.6277	.3176	-.6924	.5879	.1494
3	.4505	.1981	-.8379	.3921	.0386
4	.2553	.0713	-.8118	.3933	.0539
5	.6945	.3340	-.4773	.6285	.0047
6	.5337	.1224	-.5103	.6981	-.1579
7	.5949	.2744	-.3903	.7360	.0218
8	-.4828	-.5510	.3350	-.6078	-.1403
9	.7336	.1966	-.4688	.5360	.0307
10	.3724	.1547	-.4731	.6522	-.0702
11	.4894	.3767	-.5302	.4301	-.1443
12	.2601	.3874	-.3269	.6601	.0237
13	.7665	.3950	-.4485	.5053	.1066
14	.7594	.3259	-.4682	.3954	-.0381
15	.6565	.1953	-.4671	.1093	-.2742
16	.0212	-.5828	-.1930	-.0097	.0097
17	.0008	-.5820	.0148	.2325	.0340
18	.3052	.5791	-.3345	.3102	0.975
19	.7327	.2067	-.2691	.3641	-.1885
20	.1897	-.0089	-.1735	.1823	-.7628
21	-.1941	-.1918	.3161	-.1531	-.8106

Table 2. Correlation of variables and ATI factors

adaptation of regular schools for their acceptance, while variable 19 is connected to the teachers' attitude that the majority of pupils with development difficulties can, in regular classes of regular primary school, successfully complete an adapted curriculum. This factor can, therefore be named the **FACTOR OF RECOGNITION OF ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATION FOR PUPILS WITH DEVELOPMENT DIFFICULTIES**. As there is a positive correlation between the aforementioned variables and a factor 1, the conclusion can be drawn that the teacher-participants do not recognise the advantages of an integrated upbringing and education for the general progress of these pupils (progress in education, as well as in socialisation) and do not feel competent enough to work with them.

Variables 1, 16, 17, 18 and 8 have the greatest role in structuring factor 2. Variable

1 is related to the recognition of the advantages of an integrated upbringing and education over special, while variables 8, 16, 17, 18 show the teacher's level of familiarity with the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties and the need for securing some subjective, objective and organisational premises for successful integration. This factor can be named the **FACTOR OF ATTITUDE TOWARD REGULAR SCHOOLS EQUIPMENT**. As variables 8, 16 and 17 correlate negatively and variables 1 and 18 positively with this factor, it seems that the teachers recognise the need for additional training and the presence of special education professionals in regular school for good quality work with pupils with development difficulties. They feel that the regular school, such as it is (large classes, one special education professional for several schools,

the teachers not prepared for work with pupils with development difficulties during their undergraduate education, etc.) cannot give to pupils with development difficulties all that special education school provides.

The third factor is mostly saturated by variables 3, 4, 2, 11 and 6. The majority is related to the teachers' attitudes toward integration (variables 2, 3, 4, and 11), more specifically to the effects of the integration of pupils with development difficulties on the regular class work and the progress of other pupils. Variable 6 corresponds to the teachers' perception of the other pupils' readiness to accept pupils with development difficulties in a reasonable and friendly manner. This factor can be named the **FACTOR OF EFFECTS OF INTEGRATION ON OTHER PUPILS**. As the all variables correlate negatively with the third factor, we can conclude that the teachers feel that pupils with development difficulties do not have a negative effect on regular class work, nor that they have a negative influence on other pupils and the entire educational situation. This result shows that the teachers have accepted pupils with development difficulties, at least to the extent that they do not perceive them as a distraction.

In the structuring of the fourth factor, the greatest role is played by variables 7, 6, 12, 10 and 5. Variables 7, 10, and 12 relate to the attitudes and knowledge of teachers about pupils with development difficulties (that they are in a lot of ways equal to the pupils without development difficulties, that pupils without development difficulties can form friendships with them), and variable 5 stresses the benefits of the integration for the general progress of the pupils with development difficulties, while variable 6 stresses possibility that the other pupils can be fully prepared for their integration. It seems that this factor could be named the **FACTOR OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF PUPILS WITH DEVELOPMENT DIFFICULTIES**. As the variables correlate positively with the factor, it can be concluded that the teachers are not

familiar with the characteristics and specific needs of pupils with development difficulties.

And, finally, factor 5 is mostly saturated with only 2 variables - 20 and 21- and slightly less with variable 15. Variables 20 and 21, by their semantic content, directly relate to the teachers' attitudes toward partial integration, while variable 15 relates to the teachers' self-estimate of their competence to work with pupils with development difficulties. Thus we can name this factor the **FACTOR OF ATTITUDE TOWARD PARTIAL INTEGRATION**. As the variables correlated to the factor negatively, it can be seen that the teachers have a positive attitude toward these means of integration, and that they are prepared to work with pupils with development difficulties in non-academic subjects. This also points to the fact that teachers do not feel competent to the undertaking of the complete integration of these pupils.

Discriminant analysis of teachers' attitudes in relation to some general data

Discriminant analysis of ATI in relation to the teacher's sex, age, education level, work experience in regular school and position at work, with the objective of stating the differences in attitudes toward pupils with development difficulties and their integration in regular primary schools.

Discriminant analysis for the variable Sex

Results of the discriminant analysis for the variable Sex are as follows:

Results of the analysis of differences between participant groups are obtained on the sample of 194 teachers, 23 of which are male and 171 female.

The variance analysis shows a statistically significant difference between two groups of participants, proven with an F-test with 1 degree of freedom (see Table 3).

	sum of squares	variance estimate	discriminant function	F-test	level of significance
between groups	121.675	121.675	1	28.515	.000013
within groups	819.273	4.267	192		

Table 3. Variance analysis of the discriminant function on the variable Sex

Centroids for the two groups of participants are found. These show that the female participants have lower results (more positive attitudes) on the discriminant function than the male participants. Analysis of variance for each variable with the discriminant function, and discriminant and correlation coefficients have been found, but these results are not listed here, due to the lack of space.

An analysis of the correlation of the variables to the discriminant function shows that variables 2, 5, 13, 14, 9 and 6 correlate to the greatest extent, and positively, showing that the female participants recognise the advantages of educational integration for the general progress of pupils with development difficulties and feel that all children can be fully prepared for the adequate reception of these pupils.

Although the standard deviations for these two groups differ greatly (1.8753 for the group of male participants and 2.2415

for the females), these results have to be taken with caution, as the number of male participants in the sample is comparatively small (N=23).

Discriminant analysis of the variable Age

The results of the discriminant analysis of the variable Age show the following:

The analysis was performed for 4 groups of participants -

1. Participants between 26 and 35 years of age (N=82)
2. Participants between 36 and 45 years of age (N=58)
3. Participants between 46 and 55 years of age (N=45)
4. Participants between 56 and 65 years of age (N=9)

The discriminant analysis produced 3 discriminant functions, all statistically significant at a risk level of 0.01, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Variance analysis of the discriminant function on the variable Age

	sum of squares	variance estimate	discriminant function	F-test	level of significance
between groups	35.589	31.863	3	7.349	.000260
Discriminant function 1					
within groups	823.791	4.336	190	4.866	.003150
between groups	17.004	5.668	3		
Discriminant function 2				6.628	.000502
within groups	221.293	1.165	190		
between groups	37.854	12.618	3		
Discriminant function 3					
within groups	361.692	1.904	190		

Based on the results of centroid analysis and the correlation of variables with discriminant function 1 (variable 14, 19, 6, 15, 20 and 3, positive correlation), it can be concluded that the teachers aged between 36 and 55 are not sufficiently familiar with the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties, while older and younger teachers are more informed.

From the results for discriminant function 2 (variables 4, 3 and 8, positive correlation and 13, 10 and 7, negative correlation) we can draw the conclusion that older teachers find pupils with development difficulties a distraction from the regular work in class, but accept them, while younger teachers have a more negative attitude toward them, but feel no ill-effects in the class-work.

The analysis of the results for a discriminant function 3 (variables 8, 21 and 20 with positive correlation) shows that the youngest and eldest teachers feel that full integration is better for the pupils with development difficulties than partial integration.

Regarding the comparatively small number of participants aged over 56 years (N=9), the results for this group should be taken with caution. Still, it is worrying that teachers aged 36-55, who form the greatest part in the whole sample (N=103), regardless of their experience, do not have sufficient knowledge about pupils with development difficulties and feel incompetent to work with them. Besides, their attitudes toward these pupils are not positive and they do not recognise the advantages of full integration.

Discriminant analysis for the education level variable

The analysis of the results of the discriminant analysis for the education level variable was performed for the two groups of participants

1. Participants with degree from teachers' college (N=123)
2. Participants with university degree (N=71)

The results are shown in Table 5, and show no statistically significant differences.

A conclusion can be drawn that there are no differences in the attitudes of teachers toward pupils with development difficulties and their integration in regular education regarding the education level variable.

Discriminant analysis for the work experience variable

Discriminant analysis for the work experience variable in regular primary school was performed on the 6 participants' groups

1. less than 5 years (N=46)
2. between 5 and 10 years (N=39)
3. between 10 and 15 years (N=30)
4. between 15 and 20 years (N=20)
5. between 20 and 25 years (N=30)
6. 25 years or more (N=29)

The discriminant analysis produced 5 discriminant functions, the first 4 being statistically significant at a risk level of 0.01, and the last at a risk level of 0.05 (as shown in Table 6.)

Based on the analysis of group centroids and the correlation of ATI variables with 1, discriminative function, a mostly saturated by the variables 19, 6, 5, 15, 20 and 2, positively, a conclusion can be drawn that teachers with work experience in regular primary schools longer than 15 years show more negative attitudes toward pupils with development difficulties, and their integration and feel less competent to work with them than the teachers with work experience not exceeding 15 years.

Results on discriminative function 2 (variables 4 and 3, positively and variable 21 negatively) show that the teachers with work experience longer than 15 years also feel that the pupils with development difficulties are a problem in the classroom and that it is better for them to attend special, rather than regular, education.

A correlation of the variables ATI and discriminative function 3 (variables 16 and 3

Table 5. Variance analysis of the discriminant function on the education level variable

	sum of squares	variance estimate	discriminant function	F-test	level of significance
between groups	3.177	3.177	1		
Discriminant function 1				.666	.420835
within groups	915.814	4.770	191		

with positive values and variables 1 and 7 with negative values show that teachers with work experience under 5 years and between 15 and 20 years do not have sufficient knowledge about the characteristics of pupils with development difficulties and feel that regular school cannot provide them with everything a special school can, but are aware of their needs for more special education training.

The analysis of results for discriminative function 4 (variables 10, 8, 7 and 9 with positive values and variables 13 and 20 with negative values) shows that teachers with

work experience of over 25 years think that pupils with development difficulties cannot learn in regular school as much as they can in special school, but that integration is good for their socialisation.

Finally, the results of the correlation analysis for the ATI variables and discriminative function 5 (variables 21 and 8 with positive values and 9, 13 and 10 with negative values, at a risk level of 0.05) seem to show that the teachers with work experience in regular school exceeding 5 years feel that it would be better for the pupils with development difficulties to

Table 6. Variance analysis of the discriminant function for the variable Work experience

	sum of squares	variance estimate	discriminant function	F-test	level of significance
between groups	83.449	16.690	5		
Discriminant function 1				3.737	.003350
inside groups	839.725	4.467	188		
between groups	39.129	7.826	5		
Discriminant function 2				6.387	.000072
inside groups	230.346	1.225	188		
between groups	28.910	5.182	5		
Discriminant function 3				4.706	0.000694
inside groups	207.13	1.101	188		
between groups	13.084	2.617	5		
Discriminant function 4				4.555	.000875
inside groups	108.013	.575	188		
between groups	18.022	3.600	5		
Discriminant function 5				2.676	.022862
inside groups	252.959	1.346	188		

Table 7. Variance analysis for the discriminative function of the variable Position

	sum of squares	variance estimate	discriminant function	F-test	level of significance
between groups	51.634	51.634	1	11.512	.001208
within groups	861.130	4.485	192		

attend special classes in regular school, as full integration does not do any good for them, nor for the other pupils.

Discriminant analysis for the position variable

The discriminant analysis for the variable Position (Table 7) are obtained for the two groups of teachers - class teachers (N=72) and subject teachers (N=122) and show that there is a statistically significant difference between their attitudes toward the integration of pupils with development difficulties.

Based on the analysis of the groups' centroids and of the variable correlation for the ATI and the discriminative function (variables 5, 13, 14, 9, 1, 3 and 7 with the positive sign), a conclusion can be drawn that the subject teachers have significantly more negative attitudes than the class teachers. Class teachers accept these pupils and stress the importance of integration for their development.

DISCUSSION

Educational integration in Croatia was, as mentioned above, legalised in 1980, which was primarily caused by the world-wide spreading of a new attitude towards pupils with development difficulties and the opinion that all children have equal rights to upbringing and education. Besides, much research in countries which started with educational integration earlier were stressing the advantages that this upbringing and education has for children with development difficulties, in the areas of soci-

alisation, learning and the development of their potentials. Quite extensive research was carried out in Croatia as well, prior to the legalisation of integration, all stressing the necessity of fulfilling the objective, subjective and organisational premises of integration for its successful realisation. It has been decided that, regardless of the current condition of our educational system, the integration should be started and the problems solved "as we go along". Unfortunately, very little has been done so far. The teachers carry the greatest burden and the responsibility for the realisation of integration, while the professional help is not, contrary to legislation, available, except in the some Croatian regions.

The factor analysis of the Attitudes Toward Integration questionnaire was undertaken for a sample of 194 teachers in regular primary school in Zagreb to determine the latent structure of the teachers' attitudes toward the children with development difficulties and their integration in regular primary schools. A total of five factors have been found:

1. The recognition of the advantages of integration for pupils with development difficulties
2. The attitude toward regular schools' equipment
3. The effects of integration on other pupils.
4. Familiarity with the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties
5. The attitude toward partial integration.

Unfortunately, the position of the teachers on these factors, i.e., the attitudes towards children with development diffi-

culties and towards their integration into regular primary schools are not positive. These results show that teachers, even after 15 years of integration experience, are not aware of the advantages of integrated upbringing and education for the children with development difficulties and their general development. It seems that the problems spring from the teachers being too busy, having too big classes, their lack of didactic material and the firmly fixed curriculum. The basis of the problem probably lies in the undergraduate education of teachers being inadequate for work with these pupils, which is shown by the teachers' position on the factor of familiarity with the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties. Besides, through their position on the factor of attitude toward the regular school's equipment, the teachers themselves stress the need of additional special education training, as well as the need for special education professionals' availability in the schools. Their positive attitude toward partial integration also shows that they do not feel secure about their professional competence to work with these pupils. However, the attitudes of teachers on the factor of effects of integration on other pupils bring some optimism, as the teachers are aware that the pupils with development difficulties do not have a negative influence on the behaviour and progress of other pupils.

Discriminant analysis of the Attitudes Toward Integration questionnaire was performed to determine the differences in attitudes of teachers toward children with development difficulties.

Generally, the most positive attitudes toward children with development difficulties and their integration in regular primary schools are expressed by the female participant aged under 36 and by the teachers with less than five years work experience and the class teachers. On the other hand, the most negative attitudes are expressed by male teachers aged over 36 and

with work experience in regular school of over 15 years and by the subject teachers. The education level of teachers has not shown to be a variable discriminating the aforementioned groups.

The teacher's sex obviously influences attitudes toward children with development difficulties, although the small size of the male teachers' sample (N=23) reduces the reliability of this result.

Younger teachers express more negative attitudes toward pupils with development difficulties, but do not see them as a problem in the classroom and feel that full integration is more beneficial for their general development than partial integration. The teachers aged 36+ show that they are not sufficiently informed about the characteristics and needs of pupils with development difficulties, but accept them more willingly, although they pose a problem. The attitudes of both younger and older teachers toward pupils with development difficulties and their integration are rather ambivalent. It seems that the younger teachers know more about the characteristics and needs of these pupils, while the older ones have more positive attitudes. It may be concluded that additional education of teachers is needed by all teachers' age-groups.

As educational level has not shown to be a variable determining the participant groups with regard to their attitudes toward pupils with delayed cognitive development, it seems that neither the two-year (teachers' college) nor four-year (university) programs inform and prepare the teachers sufficiently for work with the aforementioned pupils.

It is very disturbing that the teachers' attitudes toward integration get more negative with more work experience. It is possible that tiredness of their work is partly responsible for these results, together with frustration with the high demands of their work. Has motivation of older teachers decreased so much because they realised that, in spite of the great amount of work they put in, there is still very little result? Or did they not know (insufficient and/or

inadequate training) that these small results are great for children with development difficulties and their parents.

Finally, the subject teachers have significantly more negative results toward pupils with development difficulties and their integration in regular primary schools than the class teachers. The subject teachers generally do not accept these pupils and are not aware of the advantages of integration. These attitudes were expected, as the class teachers meet these pupils daily and know them better, so their attitudes are more positive. Besides, subject teachers meet these children at older primary school ages (10-14), when the differences between them and the average pupils are more visible and the demands on all pupils are higher than at a younger age.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this work, it can be concluded that it is necessary that more work

should be put into the improvement of the process of integration of children with development difficulties in the Republic of Croatia, as much as the economic situation permits. Understanding the needs of pupils with development difficulties would help teachers understand objectives on their work with them and accept educational integration as the best solution. To realise that, the additional education of teachers is necessary, to widen their knowledge and develop their acceptance of pupils with development difficulties and their integration into regular schools.

More self-confidence, awareness of one's professional competence, and more satisfaction in one's work through more objective results evaluation greater awareness of their merits, and availability of professional and psychological support, could probably be provided by the Education of Teacher for the Development of Acceptance of Pupils with Development Difficulties program.

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