

Summary

Student teachers' competence for working with children with language difficulties in regular classrooms

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Modern pedagogy promotes the integration of children with special needs as a necessary prerequisite for their successful socialization aimed at building their competencies. Since future teachers will, without a doubt, work with children with special needs, they should develop the required competencies for that work within their studies. This includes acquiring positive attitudes towards the integration of children with special needs into the regular educational system. The present study investigated student teachers' estimates of own competence for working with children with special needs, specifically the children with language disabilities in regular classroom. The goal of this research was to determine if teacher students of different majors at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Split differ in their self-perceived competence for working with children with special needs as well as their attitudes towards their integration, given that some teacher majors don't offer classes dedicated to the pedagogy of children with special needs.

The obtained results show that students who previously attended classes dedicated to working with children with special needs have a significantly higher self-perceived competence for future work with children with special needs when compared to students who did not previously attend such classes. Furthermore, all students perceive more advantages than disadvantages of integrating children with special needs and no statistically significant differences were revealed regarding the attitudes of different college majors with regard to this issue. The obtained results indicate the importance and the necessity of building the competencies of future teachers for working with children with special, which may start by introducing classes dedicated to children with special needs into all departments educating future teachers.

Keywords: language difficulties, integration of children with special needs, self-perceived competence, attitudes towards integration.