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STUDIJA SLUČAJA: NAPREDAK UČENIKA U INKLUZIVNOJ UČIONICI

Sažetak

Inkluzija je proces koji učenicima s posebnim potrebama omogućuje uključivanje u redovite školske skupine. Nastavnik im pritom individualizira proces učenja i društveno okruženje uvažavajući njihove individualne karakteristike, posebnosti i interese.

U svrhu istraživanja dvije godine pratili smo inkluzivni razred i društvenu klimu u njemu te napredak pojedinaca. Svrha je ovog istraživanja također predstaviti metode i strategije koje se rabe u inkluzivnoj učionici s ciljem bolje društvene kohezije i većeg osjećaja pripadnosti pojedinca.

Provedena je kvalitativna studija slučaja. Uzorak istraživanja obuhvatio je 22 učenika u inkluzivnoj učionici. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da je razredna klima bila vrlo zahtjevna – u početku je bilo dosta isključenosti te verbalnog i fizičkog nasilja. Nakon dvije godine drastično je pala stopa eliminacije učenika. I dalje je bilo prisutno verbalno nasilje, povremeno i fizičko. Kod djece s posebnim potrebama evidentan je individualni napredak u socijalnoj uključenosti i uspješnosti učenja. U ovom su članku također prikazane neke strategije i metode koje su, prema mišljenju nastavnika i učenika, najviše utjecale na kvalitetnu klimu u učionici i bolju međusobnu povezanost učenika.

Ključne riječi: inkluzija, socijalna klima, učenici s posebnim potrebama, inkluzivni razred, diferencijacija

CASE STUDY: PROGRESS OF STUDENTS IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

Abstract

Inclusion is a process that allows students with special needs to join regular school groups. The teacher differentiates and individualizes the learning process and social environment, adapting it to the individual characteristics, peculiarities and interests of the students.

For the purpose of the research, we monitored the inclusive class and the social climate in it for two years, as well as the progress of the individuals attending it. In addition, the research also presents the methods and strategies used in an inclusive classroom with the aim of better social cohesion and a greater sense of belonging of the individual.

A qualitative case study was conducted. The research sample included 22 students in an inclusive classroom. The results of the research showed that the class climate was very demanding – in the beginning there was a lot of exclusion and verbal and physical violence present. After two years, the elimination rate of students dropped drastically. Verbal violence was still present, with physical violence appearing occasionally. In children with special needs, individual progress in social inclusion and learning performance was evident. In this article we will also present certain strategies and methods that, in the opinion of the teacher and the students, had the biggest impact on building a good classroom climate and achieving better connections between students.

Key words: inclusion, social climate, students with special needs, inclusive class, differentiation

1. Introduction

An inclusive classroom is a classroom in which all students, regardless of any challenges, are placed together. The school and the classroom operate on the premise that the students with disabilities are fundamentally as competent as students without disabilities. Therefore, all students can participate to the maximum degree possible in all aspects of the educational process (McMains, 2021).

Osewalt (2021) points out that a successful inclusive classroom is created primarily by accepting, understanding and attending to all students' differences and diversities in any form (cognitive, physical, social, emotional, etc.).

Mitchell (2008) points out that specific strategies, teaching methods, and checking and assessing techniques must be included in an inclusive classroom. Among the biggest challenges for a teacher in the inclusive classroom are curriculum adaptations. The main idea of an inclusive education is to establish a single curriculum that will be accessible to all students, including students with special needs.

According to McMains (2021), students learn more in an inclusive classroom. Students with disabilities achieve more, and they can more easily improve both their academic and social skills through inclusive education. Students without disabilities show a more positive attitude towards their peers in an inclusive classroom. All students learn to help each other and show more acceptance and tolerance when they all experience an inclusive education.

Being a teacher in an inclusive environment can be a challenge. To be effective, they have to understand the differences between the students and have a positive attitude toward inclusion. Teachers have to adapt the learning methods so that students can learn and work in an inclusive environment (McMains, 2021).

Inclusive classrooms are filled with different kinds of learners, each of them with their own strengths and challenges. Because all students learn differently, teachers need to specially design the instructions and support they will offer to students in order for them to make progress. Teachers meet the needs of all students by using different teaching approaches (for example

multisensory instructions, interactive materials, learning in motion methods, etc.). Differentiated teaching methods and co-teaching can contribute to better results (Osewalt, 2021).

Teachers need to adapt the materials and lesson plans for diverse learning styles and abilities. Adaptation of the lessons allows for students to learn at their own pace. Inclusive teachers have to plan lessons creatively, so that all students can learn something through this approach – the special needs children can profit from being with students who have no disabilities, while students with no disabilities have the opportunity to learn tolerance, acceptive behaviour and social responsibility (Master in special education degree programme guide, 2021), which means following the rules and established procedures for carrying out learning (Wentzel, 2003).

All students have the need to feel securely connected to the social environment and to feel worthy, loved and respected. In order for their need to connect with others to be met, teacher involvement is crucial. This implies the quality of interpersonal relationships with other students and is reflected in the extent to which the teacher takes time for students, expresses positive feelings towards them and shows genuine interest in them. The opposite of inclusion is the rejection or neglect of students. A key dimension that defines the quality of interconnectedness between individuals is the degree to which they perceive each other as accepting and supportive (Ryan, 1992).

Inclusive classrooms are set up in a number of ways. However, studies show that inclusive education has positive effects on all students. In addition to learning, it is also important to teach the students social skills that promote acceptance and mutual understanding (Osewalt, 2021).

For that reason, teacher involvement has a big effect on interconnectedness in the classroom. The students who report that their teachers show more interest in them and were more involved in their lives, reported greater commitment to learning. The impact of the teacher's support for autonomy and the provision of structure in the classroom on learning commitment is shown indirectly through perceived autonomy and competence in students (Tucker etc., 2002).

This means that it is necessary to revamp the curricula and to harmonize them with an inclusive approach, as the teacher must acquire the knowledge that is necessary to work in a diverse classroom in order to become inclusive (Štemberger, 2012). A teacher needs to be qualified for inclusion. The teacher in an inclusive classroom is no longer just a transmitter of knowledge, but a moderator, entertainer, organizer of a stimulating learning environment, mentor and promoter of independent learning (Cencič, Cotič and Medved Udovič, 2008).

Pellegrini and Blatchford (2000) emphasize the great importance of breaks as opportunities to form and maintain friendly relations. While students often connect during lessons according to their learning interests and abilities or according to the teachers' classification, during the breaks grouping according to other interests and physical abilities often occurs. In an inclusive classroom, these interests are more diverse, therefore more violence and disagreements may happen.

Disagreements are a part of building friendly relationships. Violence, disagreements and quarrels between students are difficult to predict. When it comes to rejection and aggression between students, it is essential that we not only act at the students' level (impulsiveness, control training, learning social skills), but also to motivate the entire peer group to gradually change their perceptions and behaviour towards their classmates with special needs and give them the opportunity to interact, despite their difficulties and mutual differences.

It is necessary to work with students with special needs, and it is also essential to gradually change the attitudes and prejudice of the group towards the rejected students and sensitize them to change their behaviour towards these students. It is always necessary to plan inclusion and help for students with special needs at both levels – at the level of the special needs students themselves, as well as at the level of the peer group. However, the teacher's behaviour towards these students is also important for changing the social position of non-accepted and special needs students. The teacher represents a model on the basis of which students form their own behaviour towards peers (Košir, 2013).

Teaching methods also determine the way students participate in social activities and form a social climate. Better learning outcomes are achieved in

collaborative learning environments, where more positive relationships can be established (Roseth, 2008).

Strategies and teaching methods for inclusion education are important for successful teaching and working with diverse or heterogeneous groups. Group learning, teaching cognitive and behavioural strategies, etc. are especially important for successful teaching in a diverse classroom (Mitchel, 2008).

2. Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of the research was:

- a) to evaluate the social climate in an inclusive classroom.
- b) to introduce several methods that can be used in an inclusive classroom.
- c) to evaluate tested didactic materials used in the inclusive classroom.

We posed three research questions:

- a) Is the improvement of the social climate correlated with an emphasis on working on multisensory learning and teaching about inclusion?
- b) Which methods have proven to be successful?
- c) Which didactic materials were used most commonly and have proven to be successful?

Research method

For the purposes of the research, we chose a qualitative case study and a descriptive research method. The study was based on a one-off case and was conducted during two consecutive school years from September 2019 to June 2021.

Sample

The classroom teacher was a female with a primary school teaching degree and with an inclusive education degree. In the classroom, there was also

another professional, a female, a social pedagogist by education. She assisted in the process, when necessary. The classroom teacher also consulted the social pedagogist throughout the whole school year, regarding the individual work of some students and, if needed, to get advice about social and learning challenges.

The survey covered a random sample, consisting of 22 students. All students attended the third grade of primary school, i.e. the fourth grade the following year. The students were between 8 and 11 years old. There were 9 girls and 13 boys in the classroom. Almost all students had been together for the previous two years (first and second grade).

Among the 22 students, 6 of them were children with special needs. One male student had been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, another male student with Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia, the third male had been diagnosed with moderate speech linguistic disorder. There were also one female student with Irlen Syndrome and dyslexia, one female student with minor cerebral palsy and one female student that at the start of the school year just moved from a foreign country and she could not understand or speak the language of the environment. There were also 4 students who were in the process of identifying learning difficulties: one female for dyslexia, one female for lower learning abilities, one female for behavioural problems and ADHD, and one male that was in the process of identifying learning difficulties because of the problems with visual discrimination. All four were discussed at external institutions.

Out of 22 students in the classroom, 4 had another mother tongue and Slovene was their second language.

Out of 22 students, 6 were identified as gifted in individual areas.

Data collection

Data was collected during two consecutive school years, from September 2019 to July 2021. There was no control group. After each month, a monthly meeting with the teachers was organised and qualitative evaluations were prepared.

Instrumentation

For the purposes of the research, the social and educational work of the individuals and the whole classroom was observed and monitored. The teacher promptly took notes of the students' behaviour. The social climate and the group dynamics were also monitored with sociograms at the start, in the middle and at the end of the year. The evaluation was carried out at the end of each month.

Data analysis

The data was obtained using the descriptive statistics collected during the school years (teacher's notes and observations, team meetings and evaluations carried out at the end of each month, descriptions of communication with children, etc.). The teacher's observations were also included.

The data was analysed using a qualitative analysis.

3. Results

Evaluation of social climate

At the beginning of the third grade, an extraordinary separation between boys and girls was evident. Among the girls, exclusion, gossiping and struggle for dominance over the dynamics of each group were commonly observed. In the class dynamics, the girl with cerebral palsy was often excluded. Among the girls, the girl who came from abroad was overlooked by her classmates. Verbal and physical violence was common between the boys. The boy with ADHD often intentionally reacted violently towards classmates and teachers. During class, he shouted, cursed, threw school supplies at the teacher, curled up in the position of a foetus under the table, etc. The student with Asperger syndrome was rejected by his classmates. The boy had problems mainly in the social field, he could not get involved in games, he touched his classmates in an inappropriate way, kissed them, destroyed their toys and shouted in their ears. The student with ADHD and the student with Asperger syndrome had problems in the organizational field, as they did not know how to independently prepare supplies for

lessons. Other children with special needs mostly socialized in a closed circle of up to three friends and were among averagely accepted students.

There were five popular students, who did not receive a rejection response.

The class dynamics were extremely negative, the children repeatedly mentioned that they did not like school and did not feel good in class. Concerns were often expressed by the students' parents.

At the end of the first semester in the third grade, the separation between boys and girls was still pronounced. There was still exclusion among the girls, although there was less gossiping. Occasionally, two girls, one of them being the girl with cerebral palsy, were excluded from the group, however, never both at the same time. The girl from abroad was nicely included in the girls' group. Several times, however, she was excluded by the boys, and was the victim of their verbal violence. Among the boys, verbal and physical violence generally decreased. The boy with ADHD was still verbally and physically violent. He had difficulties mainly during breaks and leisure activities. During lessons, his behaviour improved significantly. In the social field, the boy with Asperger syndrome made great progress. His classmates no longer excluded him, he started hanging out mostly with girls or he played by himself. The organizational problems of individual students remained.

Other children with special needs were classified as averagely accepted students. The number of popular students raised to eight. When students had to write down negative answers for sociograms (e.g. Who do I not want to sit with?), some expressed a desire not to write a negative answer.

In the first half of the year, the only student perceived as rejected, was the girl from abroad. She was rejected mainly by the boys. The girl with cerebral palsy was more accepted by the female classmates.

The class dynamics was very demanding. The students expressed that they sometimes felt bad in the classroom due to the violence and quarrels. Otherwise, they expressed that they liked going to school because of their friends that they could hang out with.

At the end of the third grade, the separation between boys and girls was decreasing. Female and male students often played together. There was still some occasional exclusion among the girls, but there was less gossiping. Occasionally, two girls were excluded from the group, never both at the same time. The girl who came from abroad, was included nicely in the girls' group. Several times, however, she was still excluded by the boys and was the victim of their verbal violence. Between the boys, verbal and physical violence generally decreased. The boy with ADHD was still intentionally verbally and physically violent. His intentional violence slowly decreased, but his impulsive reactions remained dangerous for other classmates. The boy had difficulties regulating his behaviour mainly during breaks and leisure activities. During lessons, his behaviour improved significantly. He also reacted well to the increased level of frustrations. In the social field, the boy with Asperger syndrome made great progress. His classmates no longer excluded him during the second semester. He started hanging out with his classmates, mostly with girls. Organizational problems remained present in some students.

Other children with special needs were classified as averagely accepted students. There were still eight popular students.

The class dynamics were still very demanding. The students expressed that they sometimes felt bad due to the violence and quarrels. Otherwise, they expressed that they liked going to school.

From March 2020 to May 2020, there was also long-distance learning due to the COVID-19 epidemic. In those two months, the main emphasis of the school process was not only on the school subjects but also on maintaining a good classroom climate. After returning to school, the students therefore continued developing the good social climate from where they had ended before the long-distance learning. Teachers did not notice any negative effects of the long-distance learning regarding the social climate.

At the beginning of the fourth grade, there was still less separation between boys and girls. Female and male students were playing together. Among the girls, there was very little or no gossiping and exclusion from the group. All girls were included nicely. Between the boys, verbal and physical violence decreased. The boy with ADHD still had violent impulsive reactions that were

occasionally dangerous but his intentionally violent behaviour decreased drastically. During lessons, his behaviour improved significantly and his organizational problems were less severe, but he was still not completely independent. The boy with Asperger syndrome made the biggest progress of all students. His classmates no longer excluded him, his inappropriate behaviour disappeared. He became almost completely independent organisation-wise.

There were still eight popular students and the students with special needs were still averagely accepted. The class dynamics were less demanding than at the beginning of the third grade. The students expressed that they liked going to school.

From October 2020 to February 2021, there was long-distance learning again due to the COVID-19 epidemic. During that time, students reported that they missed school, their classmates and teachers. They missed playing together the most. By the third month of long-distance learning, the students' motivation for learning rapidly decreased. They became less responsive to the activities focusing on maintaining interconnectedness and a good classroom climate. Their work was extremely individual, even with the possibility of long-distance cooperation. They became less responsive to feedback and during video calls. The negative effect on individuals and the social climate was worrying.

After the first semester of the fourth grade, when students returned to school, negative behaviour occurred in four boys who previously only had occasional breaches of the rules. None of them had special needs, two of them were even recognised as gifted. They had low concentration, they often disturbed the lessons with screaming, cursing and laughing out loud. They often mocked other classmates. While both male special needs students who were violent and had negative behavioural patterns made progress, all four male students had become the main disruptors during lessons. During the breaks, they often provoked the boy with ADHD to start behaving negatively and violently.

The class dynamics became more demanding again.

A lot of violence, gossiping and behavioural problems occurred during the next month. The teacher used a lot of strategies and methods for improving the

classroom climate. We can conclude that long-distance learning had a negative effect on the students' social and emotional state.

One month after their return to school, the classroom climate improved again, and the students were prepared to cooperate and violence decreased. Great motivation, acceptance and trust were established.

There was less separation between the boys and girls. Among the girls, the social climate was good, all girls were included in games. There was little or no gossiping and their relationship progressed towards cooperation. There were no perceptible differences in social behaviour and acceptance between gifted girls, girls with special needs and other girls.

On the other hand, a big change occurred between the boys. The boy with Asperger syndrome started playing with other boys, he was not excluded, and thus his progress continued. The boy with ADHD still had impulsive reactions, but his organizational skills improved.

At the end of the fourth grade, the social climate progressed. The group dynamics between the girls were good. There was no violence, just occasional disagreements they tried to resolve on their own. They became more independent. Significant progress was also made by the boys. Their aggressive play turned into calm conversations. When there was the possibility, they played football and resolved conflicts mostly on their own and without violence. During the lessons, there were less disturbing factors, and the students cooperated nicely and followed the rules.

Both of the experts who were in the classroom during both years of observation and monitoring reported a great progression in the field of social climate. At the end of the second year, physical violence had decreased significantly. There was also less or almost no verbal violence. The girls started to resolve their disputes much more independently. Exclusion from the group occurred rarely. There were no rejected students according to the sociogram. Students also progressed at the individual level and in terms of acceptance. In group work where students were randomly divided into groups, they began to help each other and did not reject the classmates of the same group with negative reactions as often as before. The students developed a sense of empathy and

mutual help and acceptance of diversity, which was expressed through actions during the educational process. The teacher reported that work in the classroom was of better quality and had improved significantly.

During those two years, the students with special needs made the greatest progress, mostly on the emotional and social level. They also progressed in social inclusion, when it comes to acceptance by their peers. They involved themselves in the social environment and group work more confidently. They regulated their behaviour more easily and their organizational skills improved significantly. A deficit in individual areas was still present.

The classroom dynamics were still demanding, but the quality of the lessons improved significantly. The students were calmer during the breaks in comparison to the beginning of the third year.

Strategies used in the inclusive classroom

With the aim of improving the classroom climate, the teacher implemented various methods and strategies into the educational process. A lot of emphasis was placed on improving the classroom climate and on mutual acceptance.

Each day started with 'hello'. The students were able to choose freely between a handshake, a hug, a high five or a ball as a greeting. Before the lessons, the teacher asked each student, how he or she was and if something important happened that he or she would like to share. The purpose of this strategy was to develop auditory perception, attention and concentration and to give the students the feeling they are heard and that they are part of the group.

Each day before the start of the lesson, the teacher explained the sequence of subjects and presented the main content of each subject.

Also, when teaching, it was extremely important that the teacher incorporated innovative teaching approaches, since there were many different students in the class who accepted knowledge in different ways.

Lessons and explanations were rarely frontal. The students often worked in groups and the teacher promoted collaborative learning. Lessons were multisensory, there was a lot of experimental work. Learning often took place on

the classroom floor or even outside sitting on pillows. The teacher often implemented movement learning in the classroom and performed visualization techniques and did progressive muscle relaxation with the students. The students had access to a computer where they could search for information on their own. During lessons, they were allowed to go to the library for the purpose of school work.

At the end of each sport lesson, they played a social game where the students had to cooperate with each other. Therefore, the class dynamics were also influenced by various approaches that had to be implemented consistently. The students participated in social games each week. Those were based on the current class dynamics and aimed at greater acceptance, developing empathy and cooperation. The teacher and other experts led conversation circles, where students were able to openly express their feelings, concerns and questions about the class dynamics.

The students with special needs got a chance to present the difficulties they were facing regarding their school work. With the help of the teacher, workshops were held where students could test what reading with dyslexia or writing with dysgraphia looked like, how difficult it was for children with autism to enter a relationship, etc. Many workshops were prepared on the topic of rules, acceptable behaviour. Other experts, a psychologist, a social worker, an inclusive pedagogist, a special pedagogist, a social pedagogist and teacher who conducted several workshops in the class, were included. In addition, counselling services and the school director were actively involved in the implementation.

A tokening method for students was used in order to improve behaviour. Each student received a notebook where they monitored their behaviour and evaluated how they felt during lessons using smileys. This strategy took place in close cooperation with the parents and proved to be very effective.

It is also important to mention the importance of teacher flexibility. As it is necessary to adapt to the current dynamics in the inclusive classroom, the teacher had to change her teaching methods in the last minute and implement the goals of the lesson in a different way than planned, as the classroom dynamics were different than expected.

Great progress in the class dynamics was also made by the positive attitude of professionals towards children. The teacher repeatedly emphasized “I know you can”. Positive behaviour was reinforced, and every minor progress was commended. This way of teaching proved to be effective at the end of the first year and throughout the entire second year. The experts who worked in the classroom also repeatedly expressed confidence in the cognitive and social abilities of the individuals and the group as a whole and continuously promoted the students’ independence.

Cooperation with the parents was also active in the form of regular conversation hours, daily information on inappropriate behaviour, the implementation of educational workshops about children with special needs and difficulties they face in education and social skills.

Didactic materials used in the inclusive classroom

A huge amount of didactic materials were used during the school years. Below are some didactic materials to which students responded positively and which resulted in a better classroom climate. Didactic materials are divided into two groups. The first group are didactic materials for individual use. Those were aimed at reducing deficits in individual areas and were enjoyed mostly by students with special needs with greater difficulties in the field of self-regulation of behaviour, organization, etc. The second group of didactic materials was intended for the whole classroom and was aimed at improving the social climate and building positive relationships.

Firstly, we will describe some of the didactic materials for personal use. The student with ADHD and the student with Asperger syndrome had the option of an additional desk next to their desk, which allowed for the easier organization of notebooks and tidiness of the work surface. Both also used a reading holder. They were much quicker in preparing the notebooks if they looked for them on the extra table than if they had to look for them in the backpack. Because both students had difficulties finding the right notebooks, a colour classification was made. The teacher coloured the spine of each notebook. All notebooks of a certain subject were of particular colour (e.g. math – yellow). The student with ADHD also liked a balance cushion that was placed on his seat, allowing him

to concentrate more easily. An elastic under the seat, squeezing ball or big ball were not effective.

Secondly, some didactic materials intended for the whole classroom were used. One of the most important ones was the visual schedule containing pictures and abbreviations of the school subjects. The lessons were placed on a schedule with a velcro tape and therefore could be removed and replaced. When the lesson was over, the teacher or one of the students removed it from the schedule. By doing so, the teacher ensured that the students knew how many lessons they would still have. Every day they knew the course of events ahead. The method was aimed primarily at the students with ADHD and Asperger syndrome, and proved to be very effective for the entire class.

A very important didactic material was also the relaxation box. When the students needed relaxation, a distraction from frustration or a reward for desired behaviour, they could choose a gadget from the box. The box contained kinetic sand, a compression ball, a massage ball, plasticine, a draw-erase plate, a release bottle, colouring pages with soothing patterns, etc. All the students loved to reach out and use the relaxation box.

It is also important to mention the relaxation corner, where the students had a pillow, a blanket and an hourglass. They could only go to the relaxation corner with the teacher's permission. It was often used as a space for socializing, a space for reflection in the event of unwanted behaviour, or a space for retreat in the event of violent behaviour. The students who had difficulty maintaining attention to the lesson used the relaxation corner several times as a short-term space to retreat and later continue working. The students used the relaxation corner frequently in the third grade, whereas in the fourth grade they did not express the need for it and preferred using it as a private space for socializing.

For females, two posters influenced the improvement of interpersonal relationships. The "I say" statements turned out to be very effective. In the event of a disagreement between them, they were able to express their feelings or describe the conflict in a non-conflicting way (I don't like zhat..., I feel like this..., Next time I want to...). The second well-received poster was the "categorisation of problems" poster, which ranked the problems faced by classmates, and described strategies on how to solve each problem as independently as possible. In

the beginning, the students needed a lot of guidance when forming self-sentences and recognizing their problem, but they soon became independent. The level of disagreements and undesired behaviour decreased significantly.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The students were part of inclusive education for two years. In addition to the transfer of knowledge, several methods and strategies of work were used, which encouraged equality and acceptance of pupils without special needs and those with special needs. Some strategies and methods have had a very good effect on the progress of the individuals and, above all, on the classroom climate.

The poor classroom climate stemmed mainly from students who had experienced problems in peer relationships. It was by overcoming these problems, that the class climate improved.

Great progress has been made in the students with special needs. They progressed in terms of easier classroom inclusion, cooperation during lessons regardless of the work method, and easier communication with classmates and teachers. Their social behaviour drastically improved, they were able to control their emotions more easily and participated during lessons more often.

The other students advanced as well. They made progress mainly in the areas of acceptance of diversity and tolerance towards students with special needs and their deficits.

In conclusion, the inclusive class can be a big challenge for a teacher, as it requires a lot of systematic work, preparation and organization not only of the learning materials, but also the regulation of behaviour among classmates and the establishment of a positive learning and social climate. The quality implementation of inclusion education also requires close cooperation with parents and other school staff.

Inclusive education has a great positive impact on all students involved, both those with special needs, as inclusion classes enables them to be equal, as well as those without special needs, who develop their skills mostly in the social field by learning to coexist in a diverse society.

Despite the results, our research also has some shortcomings. The study was conducted over a period of two years, during that time not all factors were fully controlled. Also, the improvement of the social climate and the progress of the individuals can be attributed to the greater maturity of the students. A major problem of our research was also the distance learning that took place over these two years. As our research is mainly of a qualitative nature, a subjectivity error may have occurred, as no test instrument was developed to monitor the individuals' progress and social climate in the classroom to objectify the results.

Quite a few articles have been written on the topic of inclusive education. According to the results of the research, we can conclude that inclusion is an important process that enables equality and equal participation and acceptance of all individuals, regardless of their obstacles. For teachers and other professionals, teaching in an inclusive classroom can be a major challenge. How this challenge will be overcome depends mainly on the teacher's flexibility, willingness to help, adapt and step outside the framework of their regular teaching. In the end, the success of a classroom and individual progress depend mainly on the teacher's acceptance of students with special needs and a propensity for inclusion.

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