

SOCIAL COMPETENCE IN PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

ANTE BILIĆ

Abstract of doctoral theses
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Mr. Sc. Ante Bilić Prčić has presented his Doctoral Theses on December 21st, 2007 at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb. The Doctoral Theses was presented to the comitee comprising: Milko Mejovšek, Ph.D., Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb, Mira Oberman Babić, Ph.D., Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb and Zorina Pinoza Kukurin, Ph.D., Faculty of Philosophy, University of Rijeka

Development of skills that help gaining social competence in persons with visual impairment, usually happen during process of opservation, imitation and learning through practice. The process of development of social skills of persons with visual impairment is continual process. During this process they have to use all other senses in order to achive successful social situations. Complete or partial loss of sight makes the situation of recieving accurate information from social sourrounding difficult. It is also difficult to understand the social context within the particular social acitivity and its immediate interpretation. Persons with visuall impairment, especially those that are congenitally blind, are really dependent of other persons help to get quality social informati-on that enables good social relationship with the family, friends and wider social sourrounding. If these persons do not have opportunity to practice social skills, take the risks through social inclusi-on and if they do not have feed back about their social behaviour given by sighted persons in their immediate social sourrounding, they become socially isolated and very dependent on the help of sighted persons. Social skills are developed through communication with members of the family, friends, colleagues as well as unknown people that are evaluating social capabilities of the person, of course with regards on cultural and social characteristics of the community. Social skills are defined by strong influence of the culture of the particular society, they strongly depent on social

values and socioeconomic background.

In this paper the metrical characteristic of the instrument of Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) has been analized when implementing the test upon the sample of students with visual impairment integrated and educated in main-stream school and those educated in Center Vinko Bek, their parents and teachers. In total, there has been 221 persons involved in this research as part of the sample - 79 children, 68 teachers and 74 parents.

Results have show that the instrument SSRS has good metrical characteristics that implies that it is good for using the instrument in practical, educational and scientific purposes.

In this paper, the result will show the differences in social skills in persons with visual impairment between groups considering their age, visual status and where they where educa-ted (mainstream or special school). Social skills where assessed with instrument SSRS in a way that persons involved in the research answered questions by themselves. For determining the differences in social skills the r. discriminative analysis has been used. The results have shown that there are differences between persons with visual impairment.

A part of the sample that consists of younger partially sighted girls (1-4th grade of elementary school) evaluated by their teachers and by themselves show more practical social skills than boys

of the same age. Parents have evaluated that partially sighted girls from Centar Vinko Bek show more practical social skills than their peers with visual impairment that are integrated in mainstream school or if there are Centar Vinko Bek.

A part of the sample that consists of older pupils, after selfevaluating and evaluation by the

teachers, blind girls that are integrated in mainstream school show more practical social skills than their peers with visual impairment integrated in mainstream school or as a pupils of Center Vinko Bek. Parents have evaluated that partially sighted boy from Center Vinko Bek show more social skills than their peers from mainstream school or Center Vinko Bek.