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INITIAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS FROM SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTIONS IN AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

Abstract: Students from social care institutions are a sensitive subgroup whose inclusive needs often diverse the average student's needs and for which specific teachers' competencies are expected. The paper presents the special educational needs of this heterogeneous group of school children explaining the frequent occurrence of learning difficulties, behavioral, emotional, and other developmental problems conditioned by unfavorable educational, social, economic, and cultural factors.
The valid available online study programs of faculties for future teachers for mandatory elementary school subjects and classroom teachers at the faculties of two universities in the Republic of Croatia were analyzed. The goal of the research was to determine the number of subjects aimed at teaching students with disabilities during the initial future teachers' education and the occurrence of topics of students with disabilities education in the subjects that form the basis of future teacher practice, subjects for the acquisition of didactic-methodical, psychological, pedagogical, social, and practical teaching competencies. The obtained results can serve as a predictor for future research and the basis for creating programs for professional development in inclusive teaching based on the objective needs of individual teaching professions.

Keywords: inclusion, initial training, students without adequate parental care, teacher competencies.

INTRODUCTION

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the first document that approaches children as persons with rights and not only as persons in need of care, protection, and assistance. It is a legal act of binding legal character for all signatory states. The principles of education for and in inclusion were accepted at the World Conference on Special Needs in Salamanca (UNESCO, 1994) and Dakar (2000) at the World Education Forum. The principles of educating children in an inclusive society emphasize that schools must be adapted to all children, regardless of their "physical, intellectual, emotional, linguistic or other condition" (UNESCO, 1994, Article 3). The fundamental values of the Convention: non-discrimination, child's best interests, life preservation of life, survival and development, and children's participation, apply to all children in all areas of life and must be applied by all persons in all situations (Sunko, 2016, p. 616).

The parent is responsible before the law for actions toward the child, and any violation of the child's rights carries possible sanctions (Mlinarević, 2022). Suppose there is a danger to the child's proper

upbringing within his own family, he or she may be separated from his or her family, and the parent's right to exercise parental care may be limited or taken away. Separation of a child from the family is determined only if it is not possible to protect the rights and well-being of the child by applying any milder measure (Family Law, NN 103/15, 98/19, 47/20, art. 129, para. 1). A child who is separated can be placed in a social welfare institution, with another natural or legal person that performs social welfare activities, or in a foster family (Family Law, NN 103/15, 98/19, 47/20, art. 129, paragraph 2.) The purpose of removing a child from the family must be to protect the child's life, health, and development, ensure adequate care for the child outside the family and create conditions for the child's return to the family, i.e., preparation of another permanent form of care for the child (Family Law, NN 103/15, 98/19, 47/20, Article 129, Paragraph 3) (Sovar, 2014).

Although the separation of a child from the biological family is approached with caution, after all legally available lenient measures have been exhausted and it is done to protect the child's fundamental rights, for each child, this event is a new and separate trauma, sometimes much more traumatic than those previously experienced. Children displaced from their families are then exposed to the stressor of moving to a new local community by placing them in a foster family or one of the childcare institutions without adequate parental care. In their new life circumstances, they individually become separate cultural entities within the new community, from which they can differ in speech, dialect, ethnicity, and other characteristics. Such a problematic emotional, cultural, and linguistic shift is reflected in all segments of their lives, especially in successful functioning in the new school environment. This will significantly determine the future direction of their adaptation to the new life situation by the quality of the response to their needs.

Immediately after a possible traumatic event, some reactions serve to change the feelings associated with the trauma and in most cases, over time, tolerance to the content of the memory grows and the experienced experience is accepted as part of life, emphasize psychologists (Profaca & Arambašić, 2009; Profaca, 2016; van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996). According to Profaca (2016), this does not mean the traumatic experience went unnoticed. After a traumatic event, an individual is preoccupied with what he experienced, and exposed to intrusive thoughts and images of what he experienced. This process modifies the feelings associated with the trauma and creates tolerance for the context in which the memories occur (Profaca, 2016; van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996). The traumatic experience has an impact on all areas of life: feelings, thinking, memory, behavior, physical health, and social relationships, while reactions to traumatic events are considered understandable or normal reactions to abnormal circumstances (Arambašić, 2000; Profaca 2016) that can occur immediately after traumatic event, but also weeks later. The effect of childhood trauma can be comprehensive, affecting school achievement, interfering with the child's cognitive development, and causing many psychological difficulties (Profaca & Arambašić, 2009). The same authors state that traumatized children show several behavioral and emotional difficulties compared to non-traumatized ones. Abuse and neglect in childhood is the most common form of traumatization in childhood (Profaca, 2016). Child abuse is the interaction or lack of interaction between family members that results in non-accidental harm reflected in the individual's emotional and developmental status (Hobbs et al., 1999; Profaca, 2016). Different forms of abuse can cause similar behaviors in victims of abuse, such as depression, opiate abuse, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome, and these problems can also differ among child victims of different subtypes of abuse (Bijlsma et al., 2022; Cicchetti & Handley, 2019). Research results by Briere and Runtz (1990) link physical abuse with aggression toward others, emotional abuse with low self-esteem, and sexual abuse with later maladaptive sexual behavior (Bijlsma et al., 2022; Mullen et al., 1996, p. 7). Abused children are likely to show atypical regulation of physiological functions, difficulties in understanding the changes brought about by growing up, dysfunctional connection with others, difficulties in understanding the environment, problematic relationships with peers, as well as difficulties in successfully adapting to school (Cicchetti & Handley, 2019). Deficits in behavioral and physiological self-regulation account for externalizing problems (directing antisocial, aggressive behavior outward) caused by abuse experiences that spill over into other developmental domains, such as social functioning (DePasquale et al., 2018). The above often results in numerous problems in the behavior of abused children, which manifest themselves in adaptation to school, and represent all those behavioral

phenomena in which children and young people express a negative attitude toward educators, in the family and outside, toward brothers, sisters, and peers, work and learning and positive social norms. They are recognized at school by not behaving for a long time under the accepted standards of social, emotional, and moral behavior that are suitable for children of their age, who fail to adapt to the demands of life, work, and the rules of behavior at school (and the parents' home), and for reasons that are not related to noticeable sensory impairments, speech disorders, physical disabilities or mental retardation (Bouillet & Uzelac, 2007; Zrilić & Šimurina, 2017). Family factors are most often investigated as an influence on children's behavior. Research results prove the etiological connection between behavioral disorders and parental rejection, inconsistency and rigidity in upbringing, divorce, and father absence (Nikolić et al., 2004). Social factors such as inappropriate family functioning, violence and criminality in the family, and physical and sexual abuse of children also represent possible predispositions for developing behavioral disorders (Nikolić et al., 2004; Zrilić & Šimurina, 2017). Zrilić and Šimurina (2017) cite a large number of earlier studies that prove that troubled relationships in the family, poor communication between family members, relationships without love and warmth, and parenting style (authoritarian, indifferent, and permissive) have a terrible influence on children's behavior. According to Ajduković (2000), Loeher and Stouthamer-Loeber define risk factors in different dysfunctional families categorized as: neglectful families; conflict families (constant arguments and conflicts, violent behavior, rejection); deviant families; chaotic families (Zrilić & Šimurina, 2017, p. 29). Among the unusual forms of behavior of children of primary school age are the following:

- behaviors typical of the school environment: unjustified absences from individual classes, voluntary leaving of classes, unjustified absences from classes all day long, complaining, snubbing the teacher, opposition to collective actions, cheating in school exam situations, interruptions in schooling, etc.;
- predominantly active forms of behavior: defiance, verbal aggressiveness, physical aggressiveness, lying, running away from home, selling or giving away personal property, theft, hanging out with people with antisocial behavior, begging, "tapping", vagrancy, malicious cheating, resale of more valuable items, etc.;
- predominantly passive forms of behavioral disorders: timidity, withdrawal, depression, tearfulness, carelessness (laziness), lack of interest (boredom), pampered behavior, and emotional coldness (Uzelac, 1995; Zrilić and Šimurina, 2017, p. 31).

An interdisciplinary approach of psychology, sociology, social work, law, anthropology, pedagogy, and other sciences explains the educational peculiarities of the sensitive group of socially vulnerable students. They are not found in the literature under a single denominator. Their characteristics and the particularity of their educational needs are found in the description of why children are removed from their biological families and taken care of in social welfare institutions. They are often accompanied by poverty, which is usually defined as a lack of financial resources, and the term deprivation is used when talking about unsatisfied human needs (Šućur, 2006, p. 132). The different needs of growing children (material, emotional, social, and educational) in low-income families often cannot be satisfied or are neglected, and they do not have equal access to social goods or resources that are vital for their well-being. Concerning their peer group, they feel deprived, so it is justifiably considered that they experience multiple deprivation, material and non-material (Bilić & Davidović, 2019, p. 47; Minujin et al., 2006; Šućur, 2006). Multiple deprivation affects various aspects of children's lives, limits their development, and makes it difficult for them to realize their potential (Bilić & Davidović, 2019) and can explain the causes of more frequent educational and upbringing difficulties among these children. The relationship between family financial difficulties and early developmental outcomes was examined using data collected for the MCS (Millennium Cohort Study) in Great Britain. A total of 14,661 parents participated in the survey, which was conducted twice when the children were nine months and three years old. The research results showed statistically significant, corrosive effects of family financial difficulties on these children's cognitive development and behavioral adaptation and imply that long-term exposure strongly negatively affects the child's developmental outcomes (Bilić, 2016, p. 98). Removing children from the multiple unsafe environments of biological families and their placement in the expected safer environment of a social welfare institution is the beginning of complex care and recovery by ensuring their fundamental rights, including adequate

education. By placing them in a new local community with their unique cultural identity, they are transformed into a specific cultural entity within the community of the institution where they are placed. At the same time, individually, they become specially separated cultural entities within the local and school community, from which they often deviate by speech, dialect, ethnicity, and other characteristics. Such a complicated emotional, cultural, and linguistic shift is reflected in all segments of their lives, especially in their successful functioning in the new school environment.

The Ordinance on Elementary and Secondary School Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities (NN 24/15) establishes the difficulties of students with developmental disabilities, based on which students exercise the right to appropriate educational programs and appropriate forms of educational assistance. This act regulates important determinants for defining and determining students with developmental disabilities, schooling models available in the national educational system, support models, and didactic and methodological obligations of academic staff working with children with developmental disabilities. In addition to the Ordinance mentioned above, there is also an *Orientation list of types of difficulties* (NN 24/15) as a supplement to the act to meaningfully determine and define an appropriate program aligned with the child's specific needs. The aim of the *Orientation List of types of difficulties* is to define orientation groups and subgroups of difficulties in order to determine the programmatic and professional support appropriate to the student's needs.

According to the *Orientation List of types of disabilities*, depending on the type of developmental disabilities and their consequences, the following seven types of disabilities are distinguished: 1. visual impairment; 2. hearing impairment; 3. language-speech-voice communication impairments and specific learning difficulties; 4. damage to organs and organ systems; 5. intellectual difficulties; 6. behavioral disorders and mental health impairments; 7. the existence of several types of difficulties in psychophysical development (NN 24/15).

Although it is morally dubious and potentially incorrect to categorize students without adequate parental care as students with developmental difficulties according to any of the points of the *Orientation List* based on their difficult life circumstances, educational staff must take care of a competent response to their educational needs that can be, and they do not have to be issued by a *decision on the appropriate form of education*, which correspond to the description of the needs of students with one of the listed types of difficulties stated in the Orientation List of Types of Difficulties. Acquiring and developing competencies for working with children with developmental disabilities are vital in identifying different vulnerable groups of students and responding to their complex educational and social inclusion needs.

The National Framework Curriculum (2011) establishes an inclusive approach to upbringing and education through the principle of respect for human rights and children's rights – genuine respect for every child and every person and their human dignity. The document mentioned above obliges educational workers to identify and monitor gifted children, and students with learning and behavioral difficulties, to assist children and students with difficulties, and to sensitize other children and students to their needs through help and cooperation. The same direction is followed by the National Curriculum Framework (2017) with the principle of an "encouraging and safe environment" for all students, requiring inclusive upbringing and education and providing opportunities for all students the reach optimal development of their potential, regardless of their differences in abilities, culture, social status, and other characteristics. In the educational process, it is crucial to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment where the teacher will encourage the student's progress by applying methods, procedures, and forms of teaching that best suit the student's capabilities and needs. In this sense, the needs of students without adequate parental care, in and outside social welfare institutions, are wide-ranging and challenging for every teacher who encounters them in their work, and they imply a high level of teacher competence.

Inclusion in the educational process implies the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities. It also includes all school children who are different in some sense and who require adaptation of teaching methods and techniques, individualized programs, adapted content, and communication techniques. The specific quality of inclusion results from meeting special needs, which includes the individual with special needs and society as a whole, especially the local community where the individual lives (Mlinarević & Zrilić, 2015). An inclusive approach implies the environment's readiness for changes

and adjustments according to the needs of all members of society; such an approach in education gives every child a sense of belonging and partnership (Igrić, 2015). Inclusion does not mean the absolute equality of all individuals nor their mutual agreement, but it creates a new relationship toward everything different. It is an approach emphasizing that diversity in strength, abilities, and needs is natural and desirable. Accordingly, it does not look at people through their limitations and difficulties but through their abilities, interests, needs, and rights (Brzoja & Zrilić, 2013). An inclusive school environment that will support students with ethnically and culturally diverse heritage is achieved by accepting differences, reflecting ethnic and cultural differences in the school curriculum, and supporting the development of critical thinking and activities that empower students and their parents (Faas et.al., 2018; Riehl, 2000). Sorkos and Hajisoteriou (2022) believe that the scope of inclusive upbringing and education, which initially referred only to students with special needs, because it developed from the field of upbringing and education of children with developmental difficulties, has expanded and addresses the needs of all children, including children from different cultures and ethnicities, as well as vulnerable and excluded children, regardless of the cause of this phenomenon (Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, 2022). The primary mission of inclusive education is to change the school structure that will ensure equal opportunities in education, while its main task is to "celebrate the diversity of needs and characteristics" (Felder, 2019, p. 2). Faced with the new challenges of the school, educational staff are obliged to adapt and change to create favorable conditions for the development of student's social, intellectual, and emotional capacities, regardless of their chronological and/or mental age (Zrilić, 2019). The research of Skočić Mihić et al. (2016), on a sample of 274 teachers from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Međimurje counties, assessed teachers' beliefs about the values of inclusive education, starting from the assumption that beliefs determine teachers' willingness to use adaptations in teaching and create an inclusive class atmosphere. The obtained research results indicate the positive beliefs of teachers about the values of inclusive education: teachers agree that inclusive education contributes to the development of students with disabilities, and they partially agree about its influence on the development of students without disabilities (Martan, 2018; Skočić Mihić et al., 2016). Bukvić (2014) researched the quality factors of inclusive education in the area of the city of Varaždin, in which teachers, among others, were directly asked about the possibility of accepting students concerning different types of disabilities. The results are as follows: 38.2% of them would accept a student with motor disabilities, 23.4% of students with ADHD disorder, 20.1% of students with intellectual disabilities, 10.5% of students with autism, and 7.7% of teachers did not declare. According to Martan (2018), our teachers' general attitudes and beliefs toward students with disabilities and inclusive education can be characterized as positive. First of all, this refers to the willingness of teachers to accept students with disabilities, a tolerant approach, and respect for children's rights, as well as recognizing and understanding the positive effect of inclusion on the social development of students with disabilities and other students. Nevertheless, in their attitudes, teachers also express a certain degree of indecision and conditional support for inclusive education, stressing the insufficient preparation of schools for the implementation of inclusion. They are concerned about the impact of students' difficulties on classroom management, and express a more positive attitude toward partial inclusion compared to a complete, the results of the same author's research. While they support partial inclusion of students in regular classes, teachers are reluctant to take full responsibility for teaching students with disabilities. Analyzing the attitudes and opinions of students and comparing them with the attitudes and opinions of teachers, the author concludes that teachers, unlike students, more often perceive obstacles related to inclusive education. In contrast, student attitudes are most favorable immediately after listening to a course on inclusive education, which indicates the influence of education on forming attitudes and developing competencies (Martan, 2018).

Vinković (2021; as cited in Vican, 2013) describes the school's inclusive culture as one that is based on mutual understanding and commitment to inclusive values and practices and represents an ethos built by overcoming barriers to participation, adequate access, and success of all students. The goal of creating an inclusive culture is that everyone enjoys being at school, the curriculum is adapted to everyone, diversity is recognized and celebrated, and the entire staff is dynamically dedicated to creating cooperation and togetherness. Creating partnerships with parents and the local community and cooperation with all other institutions is a priority for experts who support the needs of every child. It is a special relationship that is

recognized in listening and understanding other people's needs, understanding and appreciating what a person can and cannot do or achieve, and discovering the needs of other people around us (Vinković, 2021). The competencies of school staff for working with children with developmental disabilities are one of the fundamental factors in the implementation of successful inclusion (Šimek et al., 2020). This work does not equate students from social welfare institutions with students with developmental disabilities but emphasizes the similarity of their inclusive educational needs. They are similar in many ways since they are children whose social and emotional development has been affected by several unfavorable life factors, which may result in short-term or long-term difficulties in their functioning at school and society in general.

A teacher's competencies imply expertise recognized by those with whom he works (students and parents) based on knowledge, abilities, skills, and values. Pedagogical competencies of the modern teacher (personal, subject, communication, didactic-methodical, reflective, social, civil, etc.) are networked into the fundamental areas of the teacher's work. Therefore, an essential prerequisite for the successful work of a teacher is his pedagogical competence in five areas: the methodology of building the teaching curriculum, the organization and management of the educational process, shaping the classroom atmosphere, determining the student's achievements in school and building a model of an educational partnership with parents (Jurčić, 2012), in this context, representatives of social welfare institutions. The pedagogical basis of the work of each school is the curriculum that determines the basic features and function of the school (pedagogical, humane, reproductive), regardless of the form, type, and level of schooling. The school curriculum must reflect the totality of the school's dynamics and activities in the qualitative areas of school management, efficiency school, and the school atmosphere. In the special school subsystems of the school curriculum, the same author includes: the curriculum of social competencies, the curriculum of emotional competencies, the curriculum of intellectual competencies, and the curriculum of professional-pedagogical training of school employees. According to Jurčić (2012), a social welfare institution from which students would gravitate to a particular school can be understood as a recognizable set of cultural elements that gives that school originality and uniqueness, while school atmosphere means positive social relations in the school, development of social skills, conflict management, students safety, supporting healthy working habits at school, improving the conditions of schooling at school, and the active influence of students and parents on school life and school development.

The goals, as well as the obligations that are placed before the modern teacher, are: "school tailored to the students"; relief by removing redundant educational content; modern teaching methods; research teaching, less frontal, more extracurricular and field; increasing the independent work of students; strengthening the educational function of the school; teaching and training students to live according to individual and collective rights and responsibilities, civic morality, general cultural and civilizational values, fundamental human rights and children's rights, freedom of moral reasoning and freedom of thought, consciousness, and conscience by respecting the principles of respect for diversity and intercultural understanding. The realization of these elementary but complex goals requires developed competencies of teachers. They include: professional, didactic-methodical, psychological, pedagogical, social, and intercultural, competencies for working with children with special needs, creativity, character and temperaments, lifelong education, abilities to organize free time, and extracurricular activities (Zrilić & Marin, 2019). Blažević (2016) states that classroom teachers are aware of the diversity of competencies that modern teachers should have and rank them in order of importance: communication (75%), social (64%), pedagogical (45%), creativity (42%), methodical and computer (34%) and others. Since many theoreticians who have dealt with the field of competencies under pedagogical competencies include: communicative, social as well as organizational, because the essential task of pedagogy and didactics is learning and teaching, they should not be singled out as such.

Research on teachers' competencies exclusively for working with students from social welfare institutions is not common. The issue is viewed more broadly by questioning the competencies of the modern teacher, placed in the specific context of the competencies of teachers for working with students of various difficulties and inclusive needs. According to Bouillet (2010), the competencies for working with children with special needs in inclusive practice are: an understanding of children's social and emotional development, an understanding of individual differences in the learning process of children, knowledge of

techniques for quality leadership of an educational group, communication skills and knowledge of effective teaching techniques, knowledge of specifics certain difficulties in development and other difficulties in social integration, ability to identify difficulties in development and other special needs, knowledge of didactic-methodical approach and planning of adapted curriculum, knowledge of available didactic-methodical methods, means and aids, knowledge of counseling work techniques, practical experience in education and the education of children with particular difficulties, and readiness for teamwork and cooperation and lifelong education (Bouillet, 2010; Bouillet, 2011; Šimek et al., 2020). Mamić (2012) lists the following competencies for working with children with developmental disabilities in an inclusive environment: the ability to recognize children with developmental deviations and knowledge of the characteristics of children with different disabilities, the ability to encourage the social inclusion of children with developmental disabilities and knowledge of adaptations in working with children with difficulties and creating an individualized educational program. The author also cites competencies such as the ability to meet the needs of children, the ability to solve the problems of various behaviors of children with developmental disabilities, knowledge of the features of the social model and legal regulations, and general competencies for working in an inclusive environment (communication skills, cooperation with parents, the ability to create a safe, encouraging atmosphere for all children and parents, confidence in working with children with disabilities) (Šimek et al., 2020). Competencies for working with children with special educational needs are crucial in inclusion. However, teachers do not acquire them sufficiently (Skočić Mihić et al., 2014, p. 306). According to Šimek et al. (2020), most domestic and international research on work experience and competencies for inclusive practice was conducted with teachers or educators. The authors refer to some of the research (Bouillet & Bukvić, 2015; Brzoja & Zrilić, 2013; Kranjčec Mlinarić et al., 2016) which primarily dealt with the attitudes of teachers, principals, and educators regarding the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities in the regular educational system. However, they also covered the question of assessing the competence of teachers (principals and educators) to work in inclusive practice. The research showed that teachers most often do not feel sufficiently prepared, that is, competent for inclusive school practice, and that education did not sufficiently provide them with the opportunity to develop these necessary competencies. In addition, the same authors point to research that mainly focused on competence for inclusive practice (Bouillet, 2011; Rudelić et al., 2013; Skočić Mihić, 2011; Skočić Mihić et al., 2014). The results of these studies also show that teachers are not sure of their professional knowledge, that is, their competence to work with children with developmental disabilities in inclusive schools.

The goal of the research is to determine the number of subjects aimed at teaching students with disabilities during the initial education of future teachers and the occurrence of topics of upbringing and education of students with developmental disabilities in subjects that form the basis of future teacher practice (subjects for acquiring didactic-methodical, psychological, pedagogical, social and practical teaching competencies) as a predictor for future research on this topic and a basis for creating programs for professional development in the field of inclusive teaching based on the objective needs of individual teaching professions.

Teachers who state that during their studies, they attended mandatory subjects to acquire competencies for work in inclusive teaching show more positive attitudes toward inclusive education than teachers who did not attend such subjects (Skočić Mihić et al., 2016). The importance of initial education aimed at acquiring competencies for working with students with disabilities, both for the development of positive attitudes toward educational inclusion and for self-efficacy in inclusive teaching, has been shown by other studies (Earle et al., 2006; Marković, 2022; Savolainen et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2014). According to the observed knowledge, the following research questions are asked:

1. How many subjects are entirely dedicated to inclusive education in the analyzed study programs?

2. How many subjects (for the acquisition of didactic-methodical, psychological, pedagogic, social, and practical teaching competencies) are there in which the topics of inclusive education are partially represented in the analyzed study programs?

3. Do the topics and issues of upbringing and education of students from social welfare institutions appear in the analyzed study programs?

METHOD

A non-empirical research was conducted during March and April 2023, analyzing currently valid publicly (online) study programs of faculties that educate future teachers of mandatory elementary school subjects and classroom teachers. Two universities in the Republic of Croatia were selected according to the criterion of equal representation of studies for teaching professions, the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek and the University of Split. At both universities, education is available for classroom teachers and elementary school subjects: Croatian language, English language, history, mathematics, informatics, physics, biology (nature), chemistry, physics and health culture, art culture, and music culture. The University of Split also offers the possibility of education for a teacher of technical culture. Twenty-eight study programs at two universities in the Republic of Croatia were analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The list of analyzed study programs and websites analyzed during March and April 2023 are shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1

Analyzed study programs

FACULTY	STUDY PROGRAMME	SOURCE
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek		
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies	Croatian Language and Literature (BA &MA) One Major – Teacher Education	https://sokrat.ffos.hr/ff-info/kolegiji.php
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies	Croatian Language and Literature (BA &MA) Double Major – Teacher Education	https://sokrat.ffos.hr/ff-info/kolegiji.php
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies	English Language and Literature – (BA &MA) Double Major – Teacher Education	https://sokrat.ffos.hr/ff-info/kolegiji.php
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies	History (Ba &Ma) Double Major – Teacher Education	https://sokrat.ffos.hr/ff-info/kolegiji.php
Department of mathematics	Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Study Programme In Mathematics and Computer Science (Undergraduate University Study Programme In Mathematics and Computer Science)	https://www.mathos.unios.hr/
Department of Physics	Graduate University Study "Physics and Informatics", Teacher Education (University Undergraduate Study "Physics")	https://www.fizika.unios.hr/
Department of Biology	Graduate University Study in Biology and Chemistry; Teacher Education (University Undergraduate Study Biology – Optional Module Chemistry)	https://www.biologija.unios.hr/
Department of Chemistry	Graduate University Study in Chemistry: Teacher Education (University Undergraduate Study of Chemistry)	http://web.kemija.unios.hr/
Faculty of Kinesiology	Graduate university study programme of kinesiology education (Undergraduate University Study of Kinesiology)	https://www.kifos.hr/

The Academy of Arts and Culture	Graduate Study of Art Culture (Undergraduate Study of Art Culture)	http://www.uaos.unios.hr/
The Academy of Arts and Culture	Graduate University Study in Music Pedagogy (Undergraduate University Study in Music Pedagogy)	http://www.uaos.unios.hr/
Faculty of Education	Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Class Teacher Study Graduate University Study Programme	https://www.foozos.hr/
University of Split		
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Split	Graduate University Croatian Language and Literature Studies – Teacher Education (Undergraduate University Croatian Language and Literature Studies – Two Major)	https://www.ffst.unist.hr/studiji
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Split	Graduate University English Studies – Teacher Education (Undergraduate University English Language and Literature Studies – Two Major)	https://www.ffst.unist.hr/studiji
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Split	Graduate University History Studies – Teacher Education (Undergraduate University History Studies – Two Major)	https://www.ffst.unist.hr/studiji
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Biology and Chemistry, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Physics and Computer Science, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Physics, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study in Informatics and Technics, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Computer Science, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Mathematics and Physics, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Science	Graduate University Study Programme Mathematics, Specialisation in Education	https://www.pmfst.unist.hr/studiji/
Faculty of Kinesiology Split	University Graduate Study of Kinesiology (University Undergraduate Study of Kinesiology)	https://web.kifst.unist.hr/studij/
Art Academy in Split	The Visual Culture and the Fine Arts (Undergraduate and Graduate Studies)	https://www.umas.unist.hr/Likovni-odjel
Art Academy in Split	Musical Pedagogy and Musical Culture (Undergraduate and Graduate Studies)	https://www.umas.unist.hr/Glazbeni-odjel
Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Split	Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Programme in Teacher Education	https://www.ffst.unist.hr/studiji

The criteria for the textual analysis of publicly available study programs available on websites included the following: the number of courses that are fully thematically dedicated to inclusive education and training (goal, contents, and outcomes), the number of courses that partially include the topics of inclusive training and education in their description and status of offered subjects. When determining subjects in which the topics of inclusive education are partially represented, a comprehensive approach was taken (from difficulties to giftedness), tolerating formulations such as "*Failure (falling behind) in class"* and/or more widely set formulations *"Know children's rights and critically think about their protection, achievements and promotion"* in the form of one outcome, part of the goal, part of the content, part of the competences or part of the subject description, up to subjects in which the themes of inclusive upbringing

and education are recognized in a more significant number of outcomes, content, part of the goal, competences and/or item description. The results of the analysis are presented in *Table 2.*

Table 2

Representation of inclusive subjects in the education of future teachers (mandatory and optional)

COURSE SUBJECT/ FIELD	Number of fully inclusive courses	Status and number of courses		Number of partially inclusive courses	Status and number of courses	
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek						
Croatian language	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0
Croatian language	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0
English language	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0
History	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	3	Mandatory – 3	Elective – 0
Mathematics and Informatics	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	4	Mandatory – 4	Elective – 0
Physics and Informatics	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	3	Mandatory – 3	Elective – 0
Biology and Chemistry (Nature Science)	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	9	Mandatory – 9	Elective – 0
Chemistry	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	4	Mandatory – 4	Elective – 0
Physical education	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	7	Mandatory – 7	Elective – 0
Art	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	3	Mandatory – 3	Elective – 0
Musical culture	2	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 1	3	Mandatory – 3	Elective – 0
Classroom teaching Module A – Development Module B – Informatics Module C – English language	2	Mandatory (ABC) – 1	Elective (ABC) – 1	Module A – 14 Module B – 13 Module C – 13	Mandatory – 8 Mandatory – 8 Mandatory – 8	Elective – 6 Elective – 5 Elective – 5
University of Split						
Croatian language	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0
English language	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0
History	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	3	Mandatory – 3	Elective – 0

Subject area		Mandatory	Elective		Mandatory	Elective
Biology and Chemistry (Nature Science)	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	8	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 6
Physics and Informatics	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	2	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 1
Physics	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	4	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 2
Informatics and Technical culture	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	4	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 2
Informatics	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	3	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 1
Mathematics and Physics	1	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 1	3	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 2
Mathematics	1	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 0	6	Mandatory – 5	Elective – 1[1]
Physical education	2	Mandatory – 1	Elective – 1[2]	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0
Art	2	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 0	7	Mandatory – 7	Elective – 0
Musical culture	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0	0	Mandatory – 0	Elective – 0
Classroom teaching	2	Mandatory – 1[3]	Elective – 1	3	Mandatory – 2	Elective – 1

The number of subjects fully thematically dedicated to inclusive upbringing and education in the analyzed sample of study programs is in the range from min = 0 to max = 2. Significantly, even 8 study programs do not have a single fully inclusive subject. Most have one such subject, 14 of them, while 2 fully inclusive subjects are represented in 5 study programs. The distribution of the same courses is somewhat different when the criterion of course status is added to the analysis, data shown in *Table 3*.

In the analyzed sample, as many as 14 study programs do not offer a single Mandatory fully inclusive subject, 11 of them have fully inclusive subjects in the status of Mandatory subject a, and only one study program contains two fully inclusive subjects in its Mandatory plan (Art and Fine Arts Studies of Arts in Split). The data of the analyzed optional subjects are slightly inconsistent, and in a negative sense, even 16 of the 28 analyzed study programs do not offer a single fully inclusive elective subject. In 9 study programs, only one such subject is offered, and not a single study program simultaneously offers a choice between two fully inclusive electives. Competencies for working with children with special educational needs are of crucial importance in inclusion; however, according to Skočić Mihić et al. (2014), teachers do not acquire them to a sufficient extent, and some study programs confirm this with the number of Mandatory subjects dedicated to the inclusive needs of children.

Table 3

Distribution of fully inclusive courses according to course status

Fully inclusive subjects – Mandatory	Fully inclusive subjects – Elective

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[1] The course *Violence against children* – elective course offered in the 4th semester of graduate study; no course description is offered

[2] Course in Eng. language *Sport against violence and exclusion* – elective subject offered in 2nd semester of graduate study, no course description is offered

[3] Course *Inclusive pedagogy* – compulsory course in the 5th semester; no course description is offered

Number of Subjects	Number of Study Programmes	Number of Subjects	Number of Study Programmes
0	14	0	16
1	11	1	9
2	1	2	0

The situation is positively different when analyzing the frequency of partially inclusive subjects. The average number of partially inclusive subjects in all analyzed study programs is A = 4,607, where min = 0 (Study of Music Pedagogy and Music Culture in Split), and max = 14 (Integrated undergraduate and graduate university teacher studies Module A – development in Osijek). In this segment, too, there are differences concerning the subject's status. The study programs contain a mean value of A = 3.464 frequency of mandatory partially inclusive subjects (where min = 0 and max = 9 subjects) and A = 1.143 for optional partially inclusive subjects (where min = 0 and max = 6). As the results of earlier research showed that teachers most often do not feel ready, apropos, competent for inclusive school practice, that their initial education did not sufficiently provide them with the opportunity to develop the necessary competencies for this, and that they are not sure of their professional knowledge, regarding their competence for work with children with developmental disabilities in inclusive schools (Bouillet, 2011; Rudelić et al., 2013; Skočić Mihić, 2011; Skočić Mihić et al., 2014), new research will show the influence of such arranged study programs on future inclusive teacher competencies.

According to the OECD definition (2005), students with disabilities are a heterogeneous group of students divided into three categories based on the observed causes of their educational failure: a) students with disabilities – includes students with difficulties or impairments that are medically considered organic disorders attributable to organic pathologies; b) students with learning difficulties, behavioral problems and emotional problems (difficulties); c) students with difficulties due to educational, social, economic, cultural and/or linguistic factors (disadvantages) (Marković, 2022). The idea of inclusive education assumes that all students have the opportunity to learn together, regardless of their differences. This concept is aimed at the needs of all students, with particular emphasis on students who are threatened with marginalization, discrimination, or exclusion from the education system (Livazović et al., 2015; Marković, 2022). According to Zrilić (2022), to successfully work with students with special needs, the teacher must have the competencies to create a positive atmosphere, provide each student with a sense of security, acceptance and respect, and enable them to experience success. A teacher working with children with special needs must be ready to deal with controversial topics and face unclear and complex situations in the classroom and school. It is necessary to demonstrate the ability to consider problems from the student's perspective while respecting his origin, age and level of education and to appreciate the similarities and differences between teachers and students and the students themselves (Zrilić, 2022). Vinković (2021) establishes a statistically significant and positive connection between the assessment of the quality of education and the professional development of teachers for working with students with special needs and the attitude of teachers toward inclusion. The author also states that teachers who have a more positive assessment of their training in undergraduate and graduate education and professional training on the upbringing and education of students with special needs have more positive attitudes toward primary school inclusion and vice versa – teachers who have more positive attitudes toward primary school inclusion have a more positive assessment of their training in undergraduate and graduate education and professional training on upbringing and education of students with special needs.

The results of the conducted research do not serve the purpose of labeling individual faculties and study programs. However, its exclusive purpose is to define the parameters for future research on inclusive upbringing and education and the upbringing and education of students without adequate parental care. Marković (2022) presents the results of research which showed that teachers from the group that was trained to work with students with difficulties during initial education through three or more courses achieved the best results on all variables of the self-efficacy subtest for inclusive teaching, except for the variable "*I know how to choose for a student the place from which they can best follow the lessons*", where the best

results were achieved by teachers from the second group who, during initial education, were trained to work with students with difficulties through one to two courses. Teachers from the group that has not been educated at all to work with students with difficulties during their initial education generally achieve the worst results, except in the previously mentioned variable that talks about the teacher's related to choosing the place from which the student will best follow the lessons (Marković, 2022). Furthermore, the mentioned research points to the specific needs of further professional development of future teachers, considering that the lack of previously acquired competencies during initial studies can and must be compensated for in the process of further lifelong education. The results of research by Zrilić and Marin (2019) show that teachers strive for their students' professional development and social development and actively attend professional development. However, at the same time, contradictorily, they do not consider it necessary if it does not meet their specific needs in work. Participation in professional development that addresses topics such as the uniqueness of students with disabilities, inclusion, curriculum adaptation, behavior management, and assistive technology is associated with higher self-efficacy scores for teachers' perceived ability to work with students with disabilities and in the results of research by other authors (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Buell et al., 1999; as cited in Leyser et al., 2011; Marković, 2022). It can be determined how self-efficacy correlates with the assessment of one's competence to perform a job since the self-efficacy of a teacher is strongly influenced by individual factors such as values, motivation, self-confidence, or readiness to face challenges (Valenčić Štembar & Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2016; Marković, 2022), while competencies are based on knowledge, abilities, skills, and attitudes, and the results of the conducted research also open up this possibility.

The results of our research show that the topic of upbringing and education of students from the social welfare system is very weakly represented and undefined in the analyzed study programs. The textual analysis indicates an occasional and relatively weak representation of topics that directly correspond to the concept of students from social welfare institutions in formulations such as *"family upbringing"* and *"education in homes"*, while topics of a broader understanding and interpretation of this group of students are more often represented, such as: *"educational and social work"*, *"stereotyped attitudes"*, *"marginalized groups"*, *"acculturation"*, *"preventive work in upbringing and education"*, *"crises at school"*, *"social-emotional competences in professional work and teacher development"* , *"problems of developmental psychology: nature versus upbringing"*, *"stress in childhood"*, etc. A possible reason why this sensitive group of students is not mentioned more often and specifically in study programs is the effort to label them as little as possible. At the same time, their individual educational needs, as shown earlier, can be found to a greater or lesser extent in the description of the needs of students with developmental disabilities depending on the intensity of the experienced stress and traumas that are reflected in their overall school functioning. The inclusive needs of this sensitive group of students are incredibly complex and deserve more excellent representation in the training of future teachers. In addition, the results of this research go toward developing and improving the education system by the intentions of the Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2021-2030. (European Commission, 2021) according to which the European Commission will "support member states to continue developing teacher education systems in order to solve the problem of the shortage of teachers in the education of students with special needs and the problem of the lack of competence of all educational professionals to work with a diverse group of children and for the development of inclusive education."

CONCLUSION

The upbringing and education of students from the social welfare system unite several different areas: understanding the consequences of traumatic experiences of children and young people, understanding the limiting effects of multiple deprivations on the child's development and realization of their potential, and the possibility of developing inclusive competencies for working with students with difficulties in the development of school staff.

The research goal was achieved, and the results show that the criteria for deciding on the number of mandatory and optional inclusive subjects in the analyzed sample of study programs are uneven. In some

study programs, inclusive courses are entirely absent. The absence of inclusion of inclusive program content in the mandatory subjects that form the basis of future teacher practice (courses for the acquisition of didactic-methodical, psychological, pedagogical, social, and practical teaching competencies) in the study programs for the education of teachers of the Croatian language, English language and history is surprising. The requested data was collected on the number of subjects aimed at teaching students with disabilities during the initial education of future teachers, analyzed through the criterion of occurrence of topics of education and education of students with developmental disabilities in courses that form the basis of future teacher practice, and can serve as a predictor for future research on this topic and the basis for creating programs for professional development in the field of inclusive teaching based on the objective needs of individual teaching professions. The research will contribute to a more straightforward prediction of the future professional development needs of teachers who complete the analyzed study programs.

The research limitations are evident in the relatively small sample, including teacher studies at two universities in the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized beyond the included sample. For this paper, only the data on the number of subjects were presented, while the paper does not present a substantive analysis of the programs. Conclusions about the quality of the implemented programs and the levels of acquired competencies are not and cannot be made with this kind of analysis.

The contribution of this research is the opening of new opportunities for research on the topic, primarily in the form of expanding the started research to the remaining universities in Croatia. The presented results can serve as predictors in future research on the upbringing and education of students without adequate parental care in/and outside of social care institutions, as well as research on inclusive educational practice. Therefore, the futurological dimension of this research is also important because the analysis of currently valid study programs provides a perspective of the future inclusive competence of teachers who will become expert stakeholders in educational practice with competencies and multiple roles for the benefit of the integral development of each student in a complex and inclusive school environment.

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