

Integrating Students with Specific Learning Difficulties as part of Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Today children can be taught in different ways. There are different methods and approaches that teachers can use to teach students in a today's class, however since each of us as teachers have students with specific learning difficulties in the class, it is our responsibility to find and embrace the way of learning for all students that have been entrusted to us in this Nobel profession so not one child is left behind!

Integrating all students with specific learning difficulties can be organized from the curriculum structure, involving parents and community activities outside of the class however all of this requires great engagement and cooperation with school authorities, different individuals, family and also community.

Currently in Kosovo, the integration of students with specific learning difficulties requires additional efforts, training, motivation and also a sufficient level of sensitivity and patience.

So in order to integrate students with specific learning difficulties, aims and objectives need to be carefully planned with positive interactions, interactive approaches between students with specific learning difficulties and those with normal intelligence so all students feel comfortable with each-other in a regular school environment.

This research aims to explain the steps that should be taken in order to increase the learning motivation in inclusive education and it also presents the difficulties that teachers face and ways to overcome it.

Keywords: approaches, integration, specific learning difficulties (SpLd).

Introduction

Inclusive education as a great deal in all countries around the world aims to treat everyone the same, have equal opportunities for all children regardless of race, sex, religion or any other diversity. Inclusive education in Kosovo education has become a reality as a concept but is facing numerous difficulties in making efforts toward the realization.

Education in Kosovo has changed in last two decades. Ministry of Education has made it possible that education in Kosovo should be in line with modern education trends so students with learning disabilities have to be integrated into a society through inclusive education.

Education in Kosova in the past - In the past, in Kosovo, children with mild and moderate specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) were learning together with those with severe physical and intellectual disorders. They were all placed in a so called "special need class".

As a result, the children with mild and moderate specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) have remained isolated from the society and they were not given an opportunity to

socialize or benefit from non disabled students and they haven't been ready to join the larger or heterogeneous communities in which they could live and work as they grow up.

It is a fact that special education in Kosovo as part of former Yugoslavia has been running since 1950 but the education in these special classes was offered for a small number of children, considering the small number of schools and the non-professional staff.

Since 2000, there were great changes that took place in Kosovo education and one of those was to include mild and moderate specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) cases in regular education and work hard on their integration with other students so they can be part of the community, work and live independently and this has become an integral part of all policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo.

This idea was supported by the Kosovo Ministry of Science and Technology (firstly under the governing of UNMIK) and some international organizations such as Save the Children, Finnish Support to the Development of Education in Kosovo (known as "FSDEK"), UNICEF, Handikos, ETC. In this sense, the Ministry of Education in Kosovo continually tries to implement the best practice and this practice normally involves teachers, parents, community and administration as it is a duty for all to help Kosovo move forward.

The importance of Integration

As a teacher we always seek ways to combine one thing with another to engage our students in the lesson in order to improve their achievement. As a result, we can bring all students into an equal participation no matter of what kind or a particular learning difficulty they might have. This actually plays an important role as everybody feels the same in a classroom environment and it can help each student socialize better, develop a full personality, it strengths them to live and work with the community in the future not forgetting it makes them tolerant as all of this will help them develop a positive understanding of themselves and others.

Integration in education means to put all students together so every individual with its mind, body, emotion and spirit get developed at the same time and all students in one classroom get to know each-other, appreciate, learn and respect one-another. This is important as it will empower all students together with those with specific learning difficulties to walk and feel accepted and later serve in the community and society.

The statement of the problem

The statement of this research is to understand and to promote a deep understanding about the importance of integration in inclusive education, how to identify learning difficulties, what steps to take and how to develop and keep them going, so we can reflect a successful achievement for everyone. This paper will guide us through the steps that we as teachers need to take in inclusive classroom with one student at the

time and later apply it to everyone. Purpose of the study is to explain that with a little effort from teachers, peers and family, students with SpLDs can move forward to a great level of success. This paper will guide us through the steps of how to increase the learning motivation in inclusive education and how to overcome any difficulty along the way.

Research Hypothesis

- All students have an individual need and teachers are there to lead them to success and overcome any hindrance along the way;
- Teachers can identify the barriers and eliminate them through a step procedure;

Identifying difficulties in student learning

Terms 'learning difficulty' and 'learning disability' appear to have adopted their own definition; Difficulty as an obstacle or an impediment can be defined as something that incapacitates.

The word *difficulty* meaning as *an obstacle or an impediment* and the word *disability* meaning *something that incapacitates*; these terms cover a multidisciplinary nature of the field, but all of these terms can be understood as difficulties in academics achievements.

Learning disabilities are lifelong conditions that start at a very young age which affects development and leads to help being required to understanding information, learning new skills and cope independently.

So, although there are different definitions of the term "learning disabilities (ld)" and as a result it can confuse a parent, a teacher or a professional, they all stay under an "umbrella" term describing a number of specific learning disabilities the concept of this expression is based on problems such as hyperactivity, poor individual performance, difficulties coping accurately from the given sample, disorganized thinking, impulsive behavior, poor peer relationship, difficulty on making decisions, inappropriate behaviors with others, low tolerance for frustration, problems with reading comprehension, listening difficulties like problems of picking up key points, writing problems, speaking problems where there might be delays in speaking due to developed disorder, social problems, time management problems but it is worth of mentioning that not all of ld children will have all of these problems.

These are gathered in terms of children with dyslexia, children with dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), Language Processing Disorder, Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities etc

The term specific learning difficulties (SpLD) implies a neurobiological nature of the learning impediment in specific learning areas, and includes developmental dyslexia, dyscalculia and nonverbal learning disabilities. Alternative terms in use for SpLD are learning disabilities, specific learning disorder (DSM V in APA, 2013) or specific developmental disorders of scholastic skills (ICD 10, 1996).

Learning disabilities has different effects in student's life as it affect the way they understand and respond to the lesson.. People with learning disorders may have

problems like: Listening or paying attention, Speaking, Reading or writing and doing math. Although learning difficulties occur in very young children, they are usually not recognized until the child reaches school age.

When you identify what hinders them toward achievements, than you have to work on the steps in order to meet the needs of each student in an individual way.

Gardner (2005) concludes that "beliefs, norms, or values influence the raising of a teacher's role in classroom, his or her attitude toward students, and the procedures he uses to help qualify appropriate forms of educational support in a comprehensive process.

Our challenge as educators is to work with students individually so we can meet their lacks according to their individual abilities and to integrate them in an equal way.

Methods

Ministry of Education has to provide training on what inclusive education is and how can we implement it and develop every day. The time could be during the time when students are off of school and this will give them fresh ideas for the new academic year. The number one aim of inclusive education is to encourage independent learning where students need are met in an individual way and developed in a pair or a group way.

All students are a great responsibility for us as teachers but with inclusive education we don't want our students to fail due to lack of effort. However, some students try and try but they don't get the expected results. This statement leads us to different factors that hinder the development of students with SpLDs.

Students have their own mindset and they believe their basic abilities. They spend time documenting their intelligence instead of developing it. In order to change these we have to help our students to aim for the best and make them drill their mind to reach their potential. This will integrate students to a different level and are motivated by the desire to master their potential and see their self efficacy.

Students need to know that learning requires action. It is important to keep our students engaged all the time in the class, first by reflecting on the things that were learned and also on what is to be learned, ask questions to make them enjoy the subject.

The importance of knowing what our students love will reflect on the expected results. It started about 2000 years ago when Plato wrote "All learning has an emotional base". Managing time as part of integration; More than ever our youth is in predisposition to get disorganized due to various technology time consuming such as mobile phones, tv, online social networking, online games and all of these can be a real challenge to enjoy and also maintain a focus on studies. It is important to address the form of good habits and teach them the importance of prioritization and discipline. Develop metacognitive skills and encourage critical thinking to help students become lifelong learners. Developing metacognitive skills, students will be able to have a better self awareness and it helps them to reflect better on what needs to be improved.

When you have students with special learning difficulties, you may have students who can't read well, students who don't read well, students who don't hear as

others, students who are slower due to different factors so with all this in mind, we need to start slowly by breaking learning into small steps, give feedback, use diagrams, pictures and talk what they say in words, provide examples of strategies to use, involve SpLDs with normal intelligence students, engage them in process by giving them instructions and follow closely how they manage to do it. Although, any assessment in such classrooms, must consider cognitively difficult (Schiff-Myers, 1992; 2 Roseberry-McKibbin) and students with learning difficulties require a focus in an individual way, researchers prove that group work is effective especially for teaching reading.

Conclusions

All students have an individual need and teachers are there to lead them to success and overcome any hindrance along the way and with this in mind teachers can identify the barriers and eliminate them if they work together as a team with students and family. Through this paper, we try to understand and to promote a deep understanding about the importance of integration in inclusive education, how to identify learning difficulties and how to cooperate and work together so the implementation of inclusive education can be called a successful strategy where everyone is the same, feels the same and has the same right.

We tried to explain the importance of exposing students with SpLDs to normal subject matters and normal socializations and with a little effort from teachers, peers and family, students with SpLDs can move forward to a great level of success.

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