

Education of children with disabilities in integrative/inclusive settings in Hungary

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Introduction

Inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools in many countries - such as in Hungary – is a very important political goal. The importance of this issue comes first of all from the democratic thinking of social institutions and those humanitarian values, which the whole public education is based on, and secondly from the recognition and acceptance of those rights that state everybody has the right to be educated in schools. On the other hand, this political goal became possible because of the development of proper professional background. During the development of public education systems the normal (able-bodied) and special education systems have been developing next to each other, with very few possibilities to change from one system to another, therefore they didn't provide real solution to the complex pedagogic problem of the children. Inclusive education is a new structural and analytical way to this pedagogical challenge, which aims to combine the two educational systems (normal and special education) in such a way, that their advantages will be kept and strengthened. The now created inclusive education is based on the change of viewpoint, which states that schools must be adapted to the socio-cultural, skill and educational differences of the children educated in the school. The needs of children must be fulfilled without preferences and schools must avoid giving advantage to someone or to groups in favour of someone else. This kind of school handles children with disability as a full member of the school community and not as a member of a lower level group which requires special care. The mission of the school for all its students to accept their rights and help them in their personal development, prepare them to be able to accept and find the most suitable job according to their skills and possibilities. Everybody must believe that the differences are not bad, but welcomed and every child is accepted in every school. Key-words of the inclusive schools are “child-centred” and “differentiation”. This dissertation aims to deal with those students with disabilities who are educated in mainstreamed schools inclusively.

Questions

1. How much do teachers, P.E. teachers know about inclusive education practice?
2. What do P.E. teachers know about those rights, acts and expressions that regulate the education of children with disabilities?
3. How can the National Core Curriculum (NCC) offer a suitable program for children with disabilities that can be applied by teachers according to their knowledge?
4. Are teachers prepared for the possibility teaching students with disabilities by teacher-education Institutions?
5. Do P.E. teachers think that the help of a special education teacher is necessary on the lesson if there is a child with disability in the class?
6. Are P.E. teachers satisfied with the current situation on the level of education-policy and it is far from the ideal level?

Aims of the research

General aim of the research is to receive new information on the field of inclusive education and within this on P.E. lessons, to sustain and ensure our knowledge on this field and to help the development of successfulness in the inclusive setting. In this process the P.E. teacher has a major role, because he has to face the new challenges and with his attitude and preferences can influence the successfulness of the pedagogic act. The aims can be collected and stated as follow:

1. To ensure the compatibility of the NCC in the inclusive setting.
2. To analyze the Guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Education.
3. To get to know the P.E. teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.
4. To realize how much teachers are satisfied with the existing education-government and organization in the mainstream setting.
5. To find out the teachers' expectations for education-politics.
6. To have a closer view on teachers' experience, qualification and readiness.

Hypotheses

1. Mainstream P.E. teachers don't know the practice of inclusive setting; they have no experience and qualification to teach children with disabilities on the P.E. lesson (Padeliadu, 1992).

2. P.E. teachers don't know those laws and act that regulate the integrative/inclusive education of children with disabilities.
3. The National Core Curriculum is suitable and applicable in integrative/inclusive settings.
4. Teachers don't know those parts of the National Core Curriculum that was written in favour of children with disabilities or the Curricular Guidelines of Children with Disabilities in School Education, published by the Ministry of Education. Therefore they don't know how to apply their contents.
5. Teachers are not willing to participate in further education where they would receive extra information on how to teach children with disabilities in integrative/inclusive settings.
6. Group working is not dominant in the teachers' work, which means they don't ask for help from each other or from other experts.
7. P.E. teachers don't have a clear view on the expressions and terminology, therefore they misuse the terminology.
8. P.E. teachers think they need professional help on the lesson if there is a child with disabilities in the class.
9. P.E. teachers are not satisfied with the existing educational situation, practice, its theoretical background and the usefulness applicability of the laws and acts. They wish to have several changes in order to have successful and barrier-free education every child with disability in mainstream schools.
10. The older a teacher is the less support he gives for inclusive education (DePauw & Goc Karp,1990), while younger teachers or teachers with less practical experience show favourable attitude towards integration (Berryman,1989; Leyser at al.1994).
11. Those teachers who have more experience in teaching children with disabilities have significantly better, favourable attitude than those who have no experience (Block & Rizzo, 1995; Kozub & Porretta, 1995; Rizzo & Vispoel, 1991; Schmidt-Gotz et al., 1994).
12. Those P.E. teachers who have qualification to teach children with disabilities have more positive attitude towards inclusive education (Kowalski & Rizzo,1996; Rizzo & Kirkendall, 1995).

Methods

The research analysis has been divided into two parts due to the extensive research topic and its analytic research. The first part was a comparative study of different curricula while the second part is the analysis of the questionnaire' results compiled by the teachers.

In the first part studying the curricula – its usefulness in the mainstream schools if there is a child with disability present – analytic research method has been applied. This method was the document analysis or resource analysis. In our research we analyzed the basic document of mainstream school education, the National Core Curriculum (1995), its structure, the general aims of education, the tasks and requirements in able-bodied education. After we looked into the more specific area the P.E. and sport domain of the curriculum, and we analyzed the detailed, specific aims, tasks and requirements, also had a look at the compulsory and required teaching periods, the subject matter and how do teachers assess the performance of their students.

In case of special education and children with disabilities 8 local curricula have been analyzed:

- Local curriculum of School for physically disabled children (Mexikoi Street)
- Curriculum for children with pervasive developmental disability (autistic, autism)
- Local curriculum of an elementary school, which is practicing school of ELTE Gusztav Barczy Special Education College, where mild mentally retarded children are educated
- Curriculum of Gusztav Barczy Special Education Institution where medium mentally retarded children are educated
- Local curriculum of House of Children Institution
- Special curriculum for deaf children
- Curriculum of Dr. Bela Torok Nursery and Elementary School for children with hearing problem
- Local curriculum for schools and classes of other disability types and speech therapy classes

The above mentioned curricula have been analyzed with the same methods and steps as the National Core Curriculum.

The other method we used was the questionnaire. From all the types of the questionnaires we applied the written one, where there are written questions and the teachers had to answer in a written format. On the questionnaire we listed statements and the teachers had to value them according to their opinion on that certain topic, how they feel about the statement and they evaluated. Cumulative Likert scale was used to express their ideas about the actual situation and the ideal future situation. All together 158 questionnaires have been analyzed. The results were computed into SPSS 13.0 for Windows file after coding and this program has been used to analyze the answers. There were 99 variables which have been presented on nominal and scale measures. From the statistic analyses descriptive methods have been used, we calculated frequencies and we applied cross-tabulation. While analysing the Likert scale results nonparametric methods have been used. To asses the current situation first descriptive statistic methods were used to find out the frequencies of each variable, than Chi-square test was used to check its significance level. The same method has been used for the ideal future situation; first frequency was applied than Chi-square test was used to test its significances. Nonparametric Chi-square test was used to see, if there is a significant difference between the current and the ideal future situations. Wilcoxon and Friedman tests were applied to clarify the existing difference between the two situations (current and future). The value of “p” was accepted if it was less than 0,005 in both descriptive and nonparametric statistical tests. In case the value of the statistic test was 0,000, it was written $p < 0,001$ format in the dissertation.

Results

While we were analyzing the NCC we could realize that it doesn't have detailed, separated parts for children with disabilities or for the teachers how to teach them, but it handles the problem as it is part of the mainstream education. Those teachers who have children with disabilities in their class have to know the supplement of the NCC, the previously mentioned Guidelines which analyzes the situation if there is a child with disability in the school.

The application of the frame-curricula – preparing the pedagogical program the school where special educational need children are educated – is helped by the Curriculum Guidelines for School Education of children with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2000). The Guidelines help the schools to prepare their local curricula and their pedagogical program based on the central document of the content regulation for

the children with disabilities. These Guidelines decides the possible modification of subject matters and requirements stated in the frame curricula, it gives the possibility to leave subject matters behind in some areas, or simplify them, and it allows longer time periods for certain areas to be taught. We assume the aim of the Guidelines is to harmonize the content regulation and the child specificity in case of students with disabilities such as for able-bodied.

By analyzing the Guidelines we can state that the aims, tasks and developmental requirements as well as the forms of activity in terms of school P.E. are modified according to the students with disability's age, type of disability and statement. The aim of school P.E. for children with disability is the same as general school P.E. aims but it takes into consideration those specific changes that are coming from the fact of the impairment. The tasks are integrated into educational process in the mirror of changed and impaired personal development based on the type of disability and personal statement. The subject matter of school P.E. for children with disabilities is applied in a differentiated, aim-oriented and personal judgement way both in special and mainstream schools according to the public education act.

While planning the P.E. program we have to take into consideration those circumstances which helps and which destruct the teaching process. In accordance with Benzur (2003) while we were analyzing the Guidelines we had to realize that adaptation guidelines are needed to teach children with disability in inclusive settings successfully. These adaptation guidelines help the planning work of the P.E. teacher if there is a child with disability in his class. There we can find the difference between NCC and Guidelines because one of them is built upon the general planning and application of mainstream education while the Guidelines help the special planning.

We analyzed 8 special education curricula for physically, mentally, other disabled children and for children with visual and hearing impairments. This way we could have a wilder and inner view into their education. All the 8 curricula are compatible with the NCC, ensuring the integration from every grade. Beside they suit the guidelines of the education for children with disabilities. Besides being compatible with the NCC the curricula are suitable for the requirements of special education guidelines.

The subject system consists of

- Totally specific subjects
- Beside general aims and task systems mainly specific subject matter subjects
- And totally indicial aim and task system with very few special elements, or some subjects that require some modifications

In case of deaf children and children with hearing impairment the curricula don't analyze in detail the P.E. program as it is the same with the one in the NCC as aim, task and equipment systems. Of course this can be implemented in case of students who don't have severe disability or impairment and can fulfil the level-requirements that are stated in the NCC. In case of severe disability or impairment those requirements need to be modified or supplemented. But the modifications are legal according to the existing educational act.

The curricula take into consideration the special skills originating from the disability and built upon this general aims of education are decided. P.E. is a basic element of education everywhere, but it doesn't appear always with the same name as subject. Movement education, physical activity and physical education subjects deal with those subject matters which are listed in the NCC in the P.E. and sport domain. Periods of P.E. lessons in case of hearing impaired, deaf and mild mentally disabled children is 2 lessons per week, as it is in the NCC. In other cases 2,5 or 3 periods are allocated to the subject. It is common that the existing time periods are extended with 0,5 hour as extra time for activities, so they can have 3 periods per week for P.E. In the school for children with physical disability the allocated periods for P.E. can reach the 5 periods per week in the first 5 grades. Naturally in this case each school can decide on its own according to their best practice. Although from all this we can conclude that in curricula of the special schools physical activity has a more important role than in the local curricula of mainstream schools.

In the aims of P.E. we can see the basic movement development, correction of movement harmony, self-recognition through activity, self-confidence, development of static and active functions, motor development and improvement of adaptation and creation of possibilities for practicing sport activity. Based on these aims between the tasks we can find exercises aiming to correct the destroyed movement, exercises of general physical development, physical skills development, harmony of rhythm and

dynamic, social skills development, ball handling exercises, exiting skills and abilities development and perfection.

In the curriculum the subject matters are as follows: organizational exercises, gymnastic exercises, sport games, competitions, track and field basic movements and swimming. Breathing exercises have an outstandingly important role as well as the proper body structure exercises, games of adapted P.E., skill development and therapy methods. Although these are not on the highest position in NCC, in case of children with disabilities and their education these are very important parts of special education curricula. It is important to mention as a difference between NCC and special education curricula subject matters that gymnastics (apparatus) only appears in the curricular structure for mild mentally disabled, deaf, hearing impaired and other disabled children education. In the other schools gymnastic type exercises and skill development are mentioned in the curriculum. We suppose it is because of the difficulty of adaptation and its obstacles. We mean the difficulty in having access to apparatus gymnastics, the required muscle groups are not well developed or maybe missing and also its dangerousness.

The requirements of school P.E. differ in a big measure in special schools from those in the NCC. According to the severity of the disability the NCC requirement system can not be used in case of every child. In the special schools the requirement system decides that minimum level that must be reached to get into the next grade or level. The extra subject matters and contents can be found in the personal development program. The assessment is mainly according to his performance or to a peer with similar type of disability. It takes into consideration the age, statement, general, special and personal aims. The method of assessment is oral and written. Beside the written format (improved, well-improved...etc) which is used for grades 1-6, assessments with marks are being used for higher grades. There is another very important difference between the two educational forms curricula, which is the group working. In special schools group working, consultations and personal planning have a very important role while in the mainstream schools it can not been observed. In many cases even for able-bodied children it is difficult to achieve those tasks and requirements that are listed in the NCC because the teachers can not educate them personally and also the high number of students in a class of a mainstream school would allow the teacher to spend longer time on one student with personal care.

Analysis of the questionnaire's results

P.E. teachers are not well informed about the terminology that concerns the education of children with disability. They hardly can make difference between students who attend adapted P.E. and those who need special help. They listed some type of disabilities which don't belong to disability groups but more to special needs. So we can see that they couldn't make difference between disability and special needs.

In the local curricula of the schools P.E. is always mentioned as an important and basic subject of the general education. Exception was the 5th grade of high schools where due to professional trainings there is no P.E. subject in the curriculum.

In the elementary schools in general there are 3 P.E. lessons per week on the 1st-4th grades, while on the 5th-8th grade the number of P.E. lessons decreased to 2,8 lessons per week. In the high schools the number of P.E. lessons is decreasing, in general they have 2,35 lessons per week to exercise and do some activities. We can assume now the higher grade the students go the less possibility they have to do P.E., although they would really need it as they become adolescents and teenagers. Children with disability in an inclusive setting mainly take part on the P.E. lessons, but there were some schools where they reported that children with disability have no chance to do P.E. together with the others.

Schools offer a wide range of afternoon sport activities. Mainly Sports for All is offered in every school, but beside there are group-works, adapted P.E., and APA for children with disability. Some schools do not offer possibilities for afternoon sport activities. These afternoon sport activities are not always open for children with disabilities, so we can state that the schools and their activities can not accumulate themselves to the challenge having a child with disability in the activity. In 38% of the schools there is possibility for rehabilitation and correction exercises within the framework of the school, where children with disabilities can take part, which is a really big need for every child and family. These afternoon activities are mainly listed in the local curricula as extracurricular activities, but there were some schools where they were not mentioned in the local curricula.

We agree and support the literature findings stating that a general teacher is professionally not prepared for inclusion (Bunch, 1994; Angelides, 2004). Teachers don't really know what it means accepting pedagogy, which is needed if they have to educate a child with disability in the mainstream school. Furthermore, they don't have

qualification, knowledge or experience to teach children with disabilities on the P.E. lesson. Inclusive education as a subject was not part of the education of a teacher until 2006. That is why those teachers who have graduated before 2006 in their basic college or university education hadn't been prepared to the situation having a child with disability in their class. The Ministry of Education didn't make it compulsory to participate in further education programs where they can learn more about this educational problem. So we can not expect from teachers to have wild-spread knowledge on inclusion.

From the answers of the questionnaire it is also obvious that teachers are not willing to take part in further education programs where the topic is inclusion. As reasons they mentioned that it is time consuming, they are getting close to pension and they don't have a need as they don't have a child with disability in their class.

According to their opinion they know the integrative education, which is good, because it plays a very important role in creating a positive attitude. The more people heard about inclusive, integrative education and its practice, difficulties and positive sides the more quickly it will spread out between the teachers. This way more schools will be open to inclusion and more students with disabilities can attend mainstream school.

Only in 28% of the schools has special education teacher or therapeutic personnel, but in 59% of the schools there is adapted P.E. teacher. Although the law says if there is a child with disability there must be special education teacher applied in the school, but it seems in the practice it doesn't become reality.

The teachers believe that children with disability should not take part on the general P.E. lesson, but on a separated lesson where they can practice with special education teachers. This shows a certain negative attitude. It might come though from the lack of experience they have, or from prejudice or from the lack of theoretical background and qualification. The society, and within it the schools must be open for children with disabilities so they can enjoy the same rights and privileges as able-bodied peers. Therefore teachers would need the help of a special education teacher while working with students with disabilities, as it was stated before they don't have professional knowledge and experience to educate children with disability in an inclusive way.

They show negative attitude towards the possibility to teach children with disability, they wouldn't like to do that. In the background of this negative attitude

there might be the possibility that they have to take the responsibility on the lesson for the students. On the P.E. lesson there is more possibility to get injured, the danger is bigger. That's why the lessons require more concentration and attention from the teachers to prevent these injuries. Their attitude towards this possibility of teaching students with disability would change if there are fewer students in the class or they ensure them and the students about the special educational help or they have more access to equipments and knowledge. These kinds of changes are regulated by central educational governing body, but of course teachers must open up for inclusive education and children with disabilities.

Statements	Current situation	Ideal future situation
ME guidelines	Very rarely good	Always needed
Special planning	Never or very rarely	Always
The education of SEN is part of complex education	Never or very rarely	Always or more yes than not
Participation of professionals	Always or more yes than not (35%)	Always (60%)
Professional helps the creation of program	Never or very rarely	Always
Qualified teachers or APE teachers make programs	Always and never (different practices)	Always or more yes than not
Professional help on the lesson	Never or very rarely	Always
Able-bodied and SEN work together on lesson	Never or very rarely	Very rarely or more yes than not
Special teacher helps inclusion	Never	Always or more yes than not
Learn optimal sport activity	More yes than not or very rarely	Always or more yes than not
Everyday sport activities	More yes than not or very rarely	Always
1-2 SEN with 25-30 able-bodied in class	Don't know	More yes than not
Knowledge to asses motor learning	Very rarely or rarely	Always
Personal programs	Rarely or very rarely	Always
Accessible institution	Rarely or very rarely	Always
Exempted students go to do personal activity	Don't know and more yes than not	Always
Revision of exempted status	More yes than not	Always (80%)
Parents participation in group work	Never or very rarely	Always or more yes than not

Further education in topic	Never, very rarely or rarely	Always or more yes than not
Free access to laws and acts	Don't know	Always or more yes than not
Information about further education in schools	Don't know	Always or more yes than not
Cooperation of schools and organisations for disabled	Never or very rarely	Always or more yes than not

There is significant difference between the current and ideal future situation (Pearson Chi square test $p < 0,001$, Friedman test $p < 0,001$, Wilcoxon test $p < 0,001$).

Answers to the hypotheses

Based on the results showed above we answered the hypotheses we stated.

1. The first hypothesis which stated that mainstream P.E. teachers don't know the practice of inclusion, they don't have experience and qualification to teach children with disability in the class seemed to be true.
2. Our second hypothesis which says P.E. teachers don't know the laws and acts concerning integration/inclusion is also true.
3. Although the NCC is the first central document which can be used in the inclusive setting as well, teachers don't think it is useful in case there is a child with disability in mainstream school. Our hypothesis seemed to be false because they don't believe that the presently existing guidelines and helps are enough for special planning. They wish to have more detailed information on inclusive setting and act in future in the central document.
4. Our fourth hypothesis which stated that teachers don't know so they don't know how to apply parts of the NCC which were written in favour of children with disabilities or the Curricular Guidelines of Children with Disabilities in School Education, published by the Ministry of Education seemed to be true and we keep it.
5. Our fifth hypothesis which says that teachers are not willing to participate in further education programs to receive more information on integration/inclusion seemed to be true. Although they expressed concern for the need of such further education they would like to participate.

6. The sixth hypothesis stated that in the teachers' work group work doesn't have a dominant role which means teachers are not asking help from each other or from other experts also seemed to be true. The "we all work together for one common goal" viewpoint is not widely spread yet in Hungary which means an obstacle in the successful inclusion of the child with disability into the mainstream school.
7. Our next hypothesis is kept, true, because P.E. teachers are not satisfied with the terminology describing the inclusive setting that is why they mix up the terminology and misuse it. The preparation of P.E. teachers for the inclusion is missing from the educational system.
8. The eighth hypothesis is kept as well as it seemed to be true. Teachers reported that they need special education teacher help on the P.E. lesson if there is a child with disability present.
9. The next hypothesis which says "P.E. teachers are not satisfied with the existing educational situation, practice, theoretical background and the usefulness applicability of the laws and acts, they wish to have several changes in order to have successful and barrier-free education every child with disability in mainstream schools" seems to be true so we keep it. They also mentioned the poor school-infrastructure as an origin of problems (lack of equipments, high number of students in class, barriers).
10. The hypothesis which says the older a teacher is the less support he gives for inclusive education while younger teachers or teachers with less practical experience show favourable attitude towards integration seemed to be true because we received significant results after analysis (Pearson Chi-square test $p < 0.001$).
11. Our next hypothesis stated that those teachers who have more experience in teaching children with disabilities have significantly better, favourable attitude than those who have no experience didn't seem to be true so we deny it. According to the analysis the tests didn't show significant difference between the two variables (Pearson Chi-square test $p = 0.183$).
12. Our last hypothesis stated that those P.E. teachers who have qualification to teach children with disabilities have more positive attitude towards inclusive education and we deny it as it didn't seem to be true in our research because

we didn't find significant connection between the two variables (Pearson Chi-square test $p=0.338$).

Conclusions

According to Booth, Ainscow et al. (2000) the aim of accepting education is to overcome the barriers of learning and to include all student into the learning process. Throughout the acceptance and inclusion the differences become common and factor of the inclusive education is the teacher itself. He/she is the one who meets, educate and teach the children every day. If his/her attitude is not positive so he/she is not supporting the practice of inclusive education than children won't like the inclusive school and they won't feel well in the school and we can not have an effective education. That is why P.E. teachers must be prepared for the inclusive practice. They have to know the meaning of "child with disability" not to have misunderstanding in the terminology. Also they have to be expert on how to handle children with disability in the P.E. class without barriers and discrimination. It is also possible that those P.E. teachers who didn't receive education in their basic education would participate in further education program on integration/inclusion sponsored by the Ministry of Education which would help them to understand the philosophy of inclusion, its advantages and would help them if there is a child with disability in the class.

Teachers need help, because it is not easy to have and educate 25-30 students in one class where might be 1-2 children with disabilities as well. That is why special education teachers' work and presence is more important.

Of course it would be necessary as well to improve the infrastructure of the schools so all of them would be accessible and barrier-free for all the students. Efforts that force more successful and easier mainstream education of children with disabilities should be promoted. It means buying equipments and accessories needed for mainstream education to be successful if the child with disability is joining it. These task are allocated to the central education direction and organization, but of course teachers should participate much actively in the discussions and analysis of questions concerning the school.

P.E. teachers would need more help and directing instructions. The existing guidelines for special education on the field of P.E. are not enough. It should be discussed more detailed in the central curriculum. The other possibility is that the already existing documents and supplements should be promoted in wider

circumstances meaning those schools where at least there is a child with disability. We believe that the Guidelines edited and issued by the Ministry of Education is are applicable in case of mainstream education if there is a child with disability, but it is necessary to have a copy of these Guidelines in each schools and teachers must know its content and possibilities for applying it, to be well-informed and prepared for the new waves and values of education even if it is not applicable in that specific school.

Although teachers report that the NCC is not useful in inclusive setting we believe that together with the supplement and the Guidelines teachers can have a high level of learning process in the mainstream school.

In general we can state that what we need is a change of views in the schools. It is needed from the management of the school, the teachers, the parents and helpers. More help is required from the central education direction to prepare the teachers professionally for this new educational-political situation. It is difficult to forget the old habits and common traditions but we have to fight to give children with disabilities equal opportunities and to be accepted in the society as every other children and men. If a society will grow up with acceptance towards disability and they know and support the idea of inclusion that we are already one step closer to a better society.

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