

Possibilities of inclusion of blind and visually impaired students in a regular school in Slovenia - an example of good practice

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*"Use the gifts you have:
the forests would be very quiet if only the most beautiful birds sang in them."
(Henry van Dyke)*

ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:

children with special needs, educational program with adapted teaching implementation and additional professional assistance, teaching adjustments, visual impairment

Inclusion is a process in which the regular primary schools and the social environment reduce barriers for children with special needs, which enables equal participation of all children in the educational process. Over the past 20 years the field of education of children and adolescents with special needs in Slovenia has undergone major changes. Legislation adopted in 2000 (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami* (Placement of Children with Special Needs Act), 2000) identified inclusion as a basic principle in this area. Accordingly, the number of children and adolescents with special needs who are included in the usual forms of education is increasing, including the blind and visually impaired. Besides, there are still special educational institutions that implement tailored programs for children and adolescents with special needs. Inclusion is not just the fact that a new student has come into the classroom, a student who is different and needs more attention. Instead, there must be a carefully planned project that allows the student with special needs to be integrated into regular education. Involvement must be planned and prepared.

A few years ago, a student with impaired vision was included in the first grade of our school. It was the first example of the inclusion of a child with this type of deficit, obstacle or disorder in our school and for all professionals it was a considerable challenge, also imbued with uncertainty and fear of the unknown. Inclusion in Slovenia is provided by an educational program with customized implementation and additional professional assistance, which is implemented at the majority of primary schools. This article presents a practical example of the inclusion of a visually impaired student in a regular primary school.

INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, the Basic School Act in 1996 enabled the integration of children with special needs in regular primary schools. Children with special needs in Slovenia can be directed to educational programs with adapted implementation of teaching with additional professional assistance, which is implemented in regular primary schools or adapted educational programs or special education programs, that are implemented in specialized schools and institutions. All directed children have a right to get individualized educational programs. For the implementation of primary school programs for children with special needs, the primary school must provide experts for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of individualized programs (Zakon o osnovni šoli (Basic School Act), 1996).

The first Placement of Children with Special Needs Act in Slovenia was adopted in 2000 and to this day it was modified and updated several times, especially when it comes to the terminology of special needs and adding new special needs. The law regulates the guiding of children, juveniles and adults with special educational needs and defines the ways and forms of education provision (Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami, 2011).

The Ministry of Education and Sport in Slovenia has issued guidelines for education programs in regular primary schools with the adapted implementation of teaching with additional professional assistance, which contains instructions for blind children and children with impairment visual function. The instructions refer to the organization of the school (space, didactic aids and specialized equipment, organization of teaching for students, adjustments in teaching, organizing additional professional assistance) and professionals (teachers, school counselor, additional professional help performs expert – typhlo-educator) (Florjančič, Gerbec and Hafner, 2003: 15-18). The municipality as the founder of the school must provide material and human resources that allow blind students or students with impairment of visual function to get involved in school, receive a quality education and achieve optimal development (Cankar and Pinterič, 2014: 4-15).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this article is to present the process of inclusion of a visually impaired child in a regular school program in the Slovenian education system. Firstly, I conducted a literature search and studied the topics of inclusive education of children with special needs and the importance of inclusion for individuals and society. In the empirical part, I presented some theoretical findings, which I demonstrated with a case study.

I chose a case study because I wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation (Merriam 1998). Yin (2005) defines a case study as empirical research that explores an existing phenomenon within a factual context. Stake (1995) and Sagadin (2004) focus on the study unit – a case, stating that it can apply to a single pupil, a class, or to a group of experts who study the child's condition. Merriam states that: "...a qualitative case study is an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single case, a phenomenon, or a social unit" (Merriam, 1998: 27). Smith explains case studies as: "... a thorough description and analysis of an individual unit or a rounded system, e.g. an individual, an event, a program, a group, an intervention, or a community" (1978 in Merriam, 1998: 19). According to Sagadin (2004), qualitative case study research focuses on small-scale problems or specific segments in the field of education, mainly related to smaller groups of people or individuals, which corresponds to the research sample of this article.

The focus was on observing an individual student and describing the course of inclusion from the time of enrolment into regular school, but also giving an overview of appropriate lesson accommodations, pupil's social inclusion and participation of all members of the expert group, which Tratnik (2002) describes as the narrowest form of inquiry, but more in-depth.

This is a descriptive case study, based on describing phenomena, making analyses and drawing conclusions about the findings (Sagadin, 2004: 98). In the research process, I used the methods of observation and analysis of documents (e.g. the individualized education plan, the annual progress reports of members of the expert group, and report cards). I concluded the research with an analysis of data, relevant for the description and understanding of the topic.

Due to the limited scope of this research paper, the findings cannot be generalized. They can, however, offer insight into the research topic and broaden our

understanding of it, as well as offer guidelines for the practical implementation of the theory (Mesec, 1998: 121).

Definitions of blindness and impairment visual function

Blindness or visual impairment is a sensory disorder, which – depending on the degree of visual impairment – is reflected as a communication and movement impairment. We should know that there are two types of definitions of blindness or visual impairment we should take into account when trying to understand a child's individual characteristics arising from the disorder. The first is medical, formal, which defines a person's specific vision issue; and the second is pedagogical, more relevant to this research. The pedagogical definition is the practical one which should be taken into account in a particular case in the preparation and conduct of school teaching, the adaptation of instructions, the use of appropriate communication techniques, and the knowledge testing.

Pedagogical definition of blindness and visual impairment

Because a medical report does not say enough about how much and how an individual student actually sees, how he or she uses his or her vision, and how we should adapt the material, in addition to medical, there is a pedagogical definition of blind people and visually impaired people, which anticipates the special needs of the pupil or student, the level of utility of residual vision, and the appropriate adjustment. By this definition we divide blind students and visually impaired students as follows:

- *Impaired vision*

A pupil or student has 10 to 30 percent of the remaining vision and accepts information in a visible way, provided the appropriate conditions are met. They use corrective aids, such as glasses or lenses, as well as optical aids, such as magnifying glass, etc. We need to provide adequate space with adequate desktop lighting.

- *Severe visual impairment*

A pupil or student has 5 to 9.9 percent of the remaining vision. Most communication takes place visually using the method for the visually impaired

which requires appropriate adaptations, the use of optical aids, written materials in large print, and adapted didactic tools.

- *Blindness with residual vision*

Students have 2 to 4.9% of the remaining vision. With the rest of their vision they can still recognize smaller objects, for example, at a distance of 1 to 2 m (for example count their fingers). The rest of the vision they use in communication and work in a combination of methods, partly for the blind and partly for the visually impaired people. They need adaptations and optical devices, texts in enlarged print or Braille or audio techniques, and customized didactic tools.

- *Blindness with minimal residual vision*

Students have up to 1.9% residual vision. They can see shadows, outlines of larger objects, and heavily magnified letters. They use combined methods, partly for the blind and partly for the visually impaired people. The rest of the vision serves them primarily for orientation, independent movement, and practical employment. They write and read mostly in Braille. They need special working methods and customized accessories.

- *Complete blindness or blindness with light perception*

The pupil or student works according to the method for the blind, learns by tactile and auditory perceptual pathways. He or she uses the Braille reading and writing system, teaching aids for the blind, personalized aids for play, sports and everyday life, for orientation and movement (Jeraša, 2010: 95-96).

Regardless of the definitions given, we must keep in mind that there are significant differences between individuals in the way they use residual vision. Some people with very little vision can use it very effectively. Conversely, some people with better residual vision are unable to use it effectively.

A PUPIL WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inclusion is not just the fact that a new different student needing more attention has come into the classroom. The inclusion must be a carefully planned project that allows a student with special needs to be integrated into regular education. Involvement must be planned and prepared (Brvar, 2012: 21). The-

oretical starting points and research in this field emphasize (Ainscow, 2000, Gilliam and McConnnell, 1997, Marentič Požarnik, 2003) that in order for the implementation of inclusive practice to be successful, it is necessary to include all those involved in educational system: the student and his family, school planners and leaders, teachers, counselors, peers, and the entire social environment.

Teachers must be acquainted with the condition and needs of blind or visually impaired students and adjust the educational process accordingly. Furthermore, they need additional knowledge about teaching the blind and visually impaired. Teachers plan and implement the educational process according to the primary school curriculum with specific accommodations for individual students. The typhlo-educators, on the other hand, offer additional professional assistance and work according to the individualized educational program. The connecting role of the school counselor, who coordinates the cooperation between the members of the expert group and the parents, is very important. If necessary, students can get in touch with professionals from other institutions and ask for additional assistance (Florjančič, Gerbec and Hafnar, 2003: 16-17).

All teachers at the school who taught the student had been informed about the adjustments. All the adjustments that the student might need were unpredictable. They were continuously adapted to – depending on the circumstances and needs – and prepared daily, some weekly. We enrolled them in daily preparation for lessons.

The extended scope of additional professional assistance to our student was provided by a typhlo-educator from the Centre IRIS – Centre for Education, Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Counseling for the Blind and Partially Sighted in Ljubljana three hours a week. She helped the student in the field of socialization, orientation in the school and home environment, communication, learning organization, rough and fine motor skills, daily tasks, and sports activities adapted for blind and partially sighted people. She also had help from an expert from the inclusion support service, who taught our student from the second grade of education how to use custom hardware and software equipment on a computer. This requires a lot of skill, memory, and knowledge, which our student constantly received and expanded so that one day she could use the computer on her own.

Planning the inclusion of a severely visually impaired student at our school included:

- appointment of an expert team by the school director,
- education of teachers and other professionals at the Centre IRIS – Centre for Education, Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Counseling for the Blind and Partially Sighted in Ljubljana,
- self-education of all who were going to work with the visually impaired student,
- planning the collaboration and teamwork of teachers and other professionals,
- preparation of an individualized education program according to the decision of the Commissions for the Placement of Children with Special Needs,
- examining the necessary adjustments to the lessons,
- procurement and preparation of necessary special teaching aids,
- preparation of school space.

Preparing students for the inclusion of a severely visually impaired student

Even students in the regular primary school – or in the class in which the blind or partially sighted student will be included – must be familiar with the inclusion. Of course, the approach to students on the lower level is different than on the higher level. The first information is important and must be given correctly and realistically. Other information can be obtained by students on an ongoing basis in an actual situation or spontaneously.

A blind or partially sighted student should in no way be a burden to the school they are enrolled in. This can happen when the school is not ready for inclusion or when the students at the school haven't been enough (or properly) informed about peers with special needs. The students in the class are curious and like to "come to the rescue", so it is good to give them as much information as possible. It is best if these information are provided by a typhlo-educator, with examples and illustrations.

Preparing the parents for inclusion

In today's situation, it is difficult to imagine inclusion without the active participation of parents. However, parents should never be lonely. They can be as-

sisted by typhlo-educators, counselors and teachers at the school. The parents of the child involved will need the following information:

- how their child will integrate into the new environment,
- how they will be able to support her,
- how they will cooperate with the teacher and other members of the professional team,
- what special skills their child will need for successful inclusion,
- how they will provide special aids and teaching aids,
- what additional knowledge they will need to be able to help a school-age child (Brvar, 2012: 22-23).

The parents of the child need some knowledge and correct counseling. Their cooperation with the school and the special institution for the blind must be based on an open partnership. Only such a position of parents can contribute to their successful role in performing the responsible tasks of educator and assistant to the child at work at school and home.

It is equally important for the parents of other students in the class to be acquainted with the inclusion of a visually impaired child.

At the first parent-teacher meeting, we introduced the child, her handicap, expected teaching adjustments, and the ways of working in the department to all parents together with the parents of the visually impaired student.

UNDERSTANDING THE FUNCTIONING OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND BLIND CHILDREN

People accept information in different ways with different senses. About eighty percent of all information from the environment is obtained by sight. Sight is a sensory function that enables the process of watching and seeing and as one of the components in a person's organization enables the development of many other functions. Due to the speed and accuracy of perception of individual information, the eyes have a primary function among the senses. Blind children and children who are visually impaired due to visual impairment get to know the world, its characteristics, phenomena, and events differently from others. In early childhood, the dominant way of learning is model learning or

imitation learning. Thus, blind and visually impaired children face the first obstacle - the inability to learn by imitation and reduced or absent visual acquaintance with the environment they live in. Blind and visually impaired children have difficulties in perceiving the environment and orientation in space, have a poor judgment of distance and direction, have a difficulty in controlling movement, inappropriate concepts, or misconceptions about objects and phenomena, and problems of generalization (Sacks, 1992: 3-7).

The teacher will also be able to encounter problems that are a reflection of other factors. These are subjective or objective. Subjective is a reflection of psychophysical and perceptual abilities or visual impairment of an individual student. However, we can also consider motivation. Objective problems are most reflected in the environment with family relationships or with bad experiences (obstacles on the sidewalk).

Sight is the most important sense of perception. The less a student sees, the less motivated he or she is for spontaneous observation. Therefore, incentives motivation and the right working conditions are important taking into account special approaches and the use of customized tools (Brvar, 2012: 23).

TEACHING CONDITIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

With the inclusion of blind or visually impaired students, schools must make several adaptations and accommodations that enable them to study to the best of their abilities. The following are the most important accommodations needed for the blind and visually impaired to enter a regular school program. When organizing lessons, schools must pay attention to spatial adaptation, time management, teaching methods and strategies for imparting and assessing knowledge, and teaching aids. Compared to their peers, blind and visually impaired children generally enter school with learning gaps and with a lack of certain motor skills. They also often show a lack of practical experiences and unfamiliarity with certain natural and social phenomena. When learning about a certain subject, verbal description of the teaching materials must be accompanied with other human senses, such as touch, smell, taste and hearing, to maximize the learning outcome. Therefore, one of the most important teaching principles is the use of sensory visual imagery. This forms the basis for the development of the thinking process and the abilities of analysis and synthesis, which

call for incorporation of all remaining human senses. In short, the teaching of blind and visually impaired children should be based on the development of preserved senses (Raztresen, 2007: 27).

Environmental adaptations

Depending on the type of visual impairment, schools must make the necessary environmental adaptations to help the blind or visually impaired students move safely and efficiently through their environment. It is equally important to have an organized classroom so that the student knows the exact locations of teaching materials and other objects and can move accordingly. The classroom seating arrangement is also crucial for a successful transfer of knowledge. Blind or visually impaired students should sit close to the blackboard and the teacher so there are no obstructions that limit their auditory perception. Students with visual impairment need adequate work-space lighting – light can be natural or artificial. Most people with visual impairment need additional lighting of the work surface with a table lamp, that does not shine and has the possibility of shading. They should be provided with a working space that has the option of raising the working surface and which can accommodate all their classroom tools. Moreover, schools must secure their premises and remove any potentially dangerous obstacles, ensure handrails equipped with Braille orientation signs and offer adequate lighting conditions. They should also provide permanent and well-marked locations for these students in the dining room, the locker room and in other places. Movement around the school should be made easier and safer with contrastingly colored nosing of stairs, pillars and other obstacles (Florjančič et al., 1999: 399).

Environmental adaptations should also include adequate room for teachers to offer additional professional assistance (Florjančič, Gerbec and Hafnar, 2003: 15).

We adapted the school space and met the appropriate space requirements for learning and working. The student always sat close to the teacher, because of the teacher's undisturbed auditory perception, to ensure contact with the teacher, to monitor her work and a good overview of the notes on the school board.

We have provided the student with a larger space for storing teaching aids and supplies. She was also provided with adequately equipped space for individual treatments.

Walking and orientation in the school were made easier for the student with colored orientation points, with guides along the hallway walls (Picture 1) and contrasting edges of the staircase. At the beginning of education, we always took her through the school, to get to know the space and get used to it, and we also helped her carry her school bag. She quickly mastered the orientation in the school premises and around the school and didn't need such help anymore.



PICTURE 1 Contrasting orientation lines on the stairs and hallway of the school
Source: Kozmus (2019: 56)

Didactic aids and equipment

The school bought a desk with the possibility of raising the work surface for the student, which helps to bring the reading surface closer and prevent improper posture (Picture 2). She also used non-slip mats on the table.



PICTURE 2 A table with the possibility of raising the work surface
Source: own

Because of teaching in different classrooms from the sixth to the ninth grade, the student used a portable stand with the ability to raise the desktop for writing and reading made by the school janitor (Picture 3). The student placed it



PICTURE 3 Portable stand with the possibility of lifting the work surface
Source: own

on an ordinary school desk.

We need to provide textbooks and workbooks for visually impaired students in large print and on paper that is not glossy nor intensely white. It is recommended to use markers. Photos and pictures should be clear and of contrasting colors. The pens should have a thin but highly legible line width. The level of magnification of study materials depends on the student's type and severity of visual impairment. Sufficient clarity and transparency of visual material must be provided. The use of appropriate magnifiers is also recommended. Blind students are provided with various geometric accessories such as tactile drawing paper, a Braille typewriter and Braille textbooks and other reading materials (Florjančič, Gerbec and Hafnar, 2003: 15-16, Brvar, 2010: 21). The use of modern technological innovations, such as the computer, internet, speech synthesizer, scanner and screen reader, is highly recommended when teaching blind or visually impaired students. These aids also make the job easier for the teacher.

In the third grade, our student started using an optical aid – a magnifying glass for better reading and a review of pictorial material (already increased). There are several types of such products on the market, but her parents opted for a hand-held magnifying glass because she was quite skilled at using it.

Although blind or partially sighted students need personalized textbooks and workbooks, they cannot be obtained on the market in Slovenia because, in each school, teachers autonomously choose the textbooks of the publishers they will use for teaching. Therefore, in the first three school years, teachers and other professionals enlarged most of the written material they used in teaching (assignments from workbooks, learning materials from textbooks, worksheets, all texts, notes from the board, etc.). From the fourth grade onwards, the school librarian received textbooks and workbooks in electronic form from the textbook publisher (CD) (Picture 4). Since then,



PICTURE 4 Textbook for the Slovenian language on CD

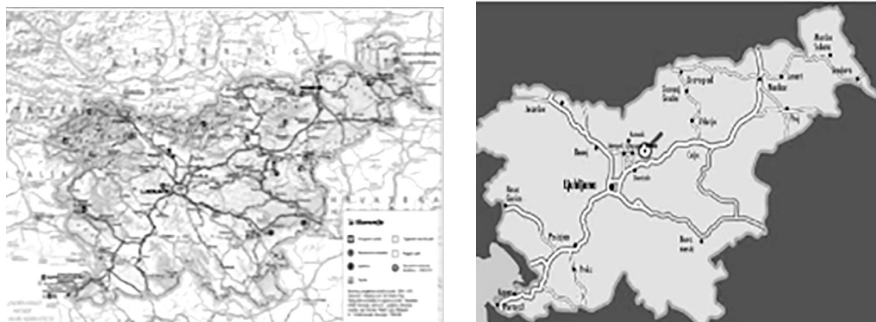
Source: http://strokovnicenter.splet.arnes.si/files/2018/03/Katalog-pripomo%C4%8Dkov-vsi_2019.pdf

the parents (because they had that opportunity) have increased texts, work-books, and other teaching materials on agreed topics in collaboration with teachers.

Teaching methods and strategies for a successful transfer of knowledge

The teachers must speak loudly and clearly, pay attention to the appropriate distance to the observed object(s) or subject(s) (experiments, excursions, plays etc.), use enlarged print photocopies and magnifiers (magnifying glass, electronic magnifiers, monitors ...). To avoid copying from the blackboard, teachers can make use of the following methods: listening to pre-recorded audio material on a dictaphone or a smartphone, supplying the students with printed and appropriately enlarged copies of the study material, while other students copy from the blackboard. Teachers should also include teaching aids that require the use of other senses (hearing, touch, smell, taste), e.g. the school garden, natural environment, models, tactile maps, statues, class sandboxes etc. The teachers should clearly and accurately describe the procedures of experiments they are demonstrating. The students should be allowed to closely examine the blackboard and the teaching aids. Learning content should be written in big enough letters and not contain too much detail. The chalk and the blackboard should be of contrasting colors (a black board and white or yellow chalk). As a result of technological advances, blind and visually impaired students can also use numerous ICT devices, which make it easier for them to follow lessons, record teaching materials and communicate, as well as facilitate pedagogical work for teachers. Such gadgets include, among others, a screen reader, a scanner, a computer etc. (Florjančič, Gerbec and Hafnar, 2003:17-18).

In addition to the above, the student had the right to use the following aids and adjustments: copies on glossy paper (cream color), the use of geometric



PICTURE 5 Example of a custom map

Source: http://strokovnicenter.splet.arnes.si/files/2018/03/Katalog-pripomo%C4%8Dkov-vsi_2019.pdf

aids for the visually impaired, pictures and maps with essential data only (Picture 5), models for displaying learning content, the possibility of using a dictaphone or a smartphone to record the teacher's explanation...

Individualized approach of teachers for our student was embraced: positive incentives at work, supervision of work and guidance with additional explanations, help with editing notes, preparation of photocopies of teaching materials, as needed, assistance in organizing work and learning planning, physical assistance in performing various tasks in physical education (walking on a bench, jumping over obstacles and ropes, playing with a ball (sounding balls), throwing a ball into a goal (Picture 6), a polygon, relay games, etc.) was provided when it was considered necessary. Otherwise, she had extended time and teacher supervision. She did not compete with other students in certain relays, games, training grounds, or in group sports. Although she was not assessed of physical education, the student was always involved in activities according to her abilities. Teachers encouraged her strong areas, she had extended time to read texts and transcripts from the school blackboard, customized content and volume of the



PICTURE 6 Sounding balls

Source: http://strokovnicenter.splet.arnes.si/files/2018/03/Katalog-pripomo%C4%8Dkov-vsi_2019.pdf

required reading (capital letters), when the student was not in school, worksheets and teaching notes were delivered to her (adapted) in a computer program, so she could save them to her device or paste them into notebooks.

Methodological and didactic adjustments which our student needed: mandatory used of A4 notebooks with more strongly colored lines and with greater spacing between them (Picture 7), enlarged fonts of all worksheets: Arial or Tahoma font 20-26pt, if the summary text had four lines or more, the required line spacing was 1.5pt, the paragraph spacing was at least 2pt, and the line alignment was left (Picture 8), study sheets were printed in color (sketches, pictures with basic information only, etc.), when working on the computer, the student could enlarge the text as much as she wanted (Picture 9), multisensory forms of teaching by active student participation, concrete visual representations.

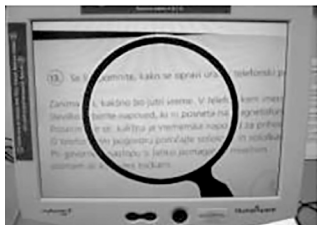


PICTURE 7 Custom notebooks with stripes
Source: own

JANČEK – JEŽEK

Mati mesi kruh. Mali Janček vedno sili k njej, ker hoče tudi on mesiti. »Beži no, ježek!« pravi mati nejevoljna. Komaj mati reče sinu ježek, že se deček res spremeni v ježka. Za ježa pa ni mesta pri hiši. Zato je tudi Janček – ježek odšel v gozd; tam si je pod votlo hruško izkopal jamo in je v njej prebival sedem let.

PICTURE 8 An example of a student-friendly summary text
Source: own



PICTURE 9 Enlarged text on the computer

Source: http://strokovnicenter.splet.arnes.si/files/2018/03/Katalog-pripomo%C4%8Dkov-vsi_2019.pdf

Progress tracking and assessment of knowledge

Even blind and partially sighted students must reach the learning objectives of the curriculum at the end of their education. Teachers are impartial assessors who continuously track students' acquired knowledge, which makes it easier to identify other learning disabilities as soon as possible. The examination and assessment of knowledge must hence be adjusted as well. It is prudent to exclude learning content which blind or visually impaired students would have trouble mastering because of their condition. It should be replaced by appropriate and individualized content that allows these students to demonstrate their acquired knowledge. Teachers should also prioritize oral over written assessment, adjust the working time and make the necessary test adaptations (format, print, content). Progress assessment tests should be based on the components of the individualized education plan (Florjančič, Gerbec, Hafnar, 2003: 18).

Our student had extended time for written tests by 50%, enlarged font size in written tests (20pt), on A4 paper, the tasks were in the prescribed font, size, line spacing, and font alignment on the left. There could be only two tasks on one page, thus creating a written test on several pages (for example 6, 7) which the student solved individually (when she solved one page, she put it aside and took the other, etc.), more space for answers on paper.

Our student has reached all basic standards of knowledge over the years of education. An important adjustment was that we did not insist on learning the



PICTURE 10

Graphomotor exercises and text writing

Source: Randjelović (2019: 82)

handwritten letters, so the student wrote in small print and her knowledge of spelling in the written tests could be assessed correctly (Picture 10).

Such success of the child was possible with the constant participation and trust of all stakeholders in the school process:

- *a student* who had average mental capacities without deviations and specific learning difficulties and who was personally very balanced and mature, very responsible, diligent, and motivated to learn,
- *parents* who provided support and assistance to the child, followed the opinion and instructions of the teachers and other professionals, and regularly cooperated with us,
- *teachers* who accepted responsibility and made adjustments often did extra work, and
- *specialist educators and others* who helped the student develop in all the necessary areas of development.

CONCLUSION

The presentation of inclusive education of severely visually impaired student in regular primary school can be concluded with the knowledge that our student has progressed well and developed her abilities and potentials, has become effective and successful in learning. Evidence of this is the student's school success certificates, evaluation reports of teachers and providers of additional professional assistance, as well as the results of national tests of students' knowledge after the second and third periods of primary school education in Slovenia. Such results are also a reflection of all the support and understanding of teachers and other professionals at the school. According to various experts, the indicator of successful inclusion of blind and partially sighted children is not only the achievement of certain academic standards, but also the achievement of social competencies (Sacks and Silberman, 2000, Silberman and Sacks, 2007, Žolgar Jerković et al., 2010). But there has been no such success in the social inclusion of our student. The girl was left quite alone and despite raising awareness of other children, she was not accepted as she could and should have been. Because of this, she also moved away from her peers, even though she wanted company. So, she did not have enough peer

interlocutors and opportunities for socializing. Therefore, we can summarize Tatjana Patafta's reflections (2010: 14) that the essence of inclusion is the sense of belonging that every human being wants to have and no professional decision can guarantee this.

When a visually impaired student enrolled in our school, professionals encountered many fears and beliefs. The results of various studies also confirm the special needs of the individual as an important predictor. This is less beneficial for blind or partially sighted students. Due to the low incidence of blindness and low vision, teachers have less experience in teaching a child and as a result, more irrational beliefs, fears and dilemmas can be expected (Brown et al., 2013, Kef, 2002, Koutrouba et al., 2006, Wall, 2002). All of us, who were involved in the presented process of inclusion, got acquainted with the complexity of the process of inclusive education of blind and partially sighted children, and learned a lot.

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MOGUĆNOSTI INKLUZIJE SLIJEPIH I SLABOVIDNIH UČENIKA U REDOVITU ŠKOLU U SLOVENIJI - PRIMJER DOBRE PRAKSE

Jelka MARIN

OŠ Martina Konšaka Maribor

„Koristite darove koje imate:
šume bi bile vrlo tihe da u njima pjevaju samo najljepše ptice.”
(Henry van Dyke)

SAŽETAK

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

djeca s posebnim potrebama, obrazovni program s prilagođenom implementacijom nastave uz dodatnu stručnu pomoć, prilagodbe nastave, slabovidnost i slijepoća

Inkluzija je proces u kojem redovne osnovne škole i socijalno okruženje smanjuju prepreke za djecu s posebnim potrebama, što omogućava ravnopravno sudjelovanje sve djece u obrazovnom procesu.

Područje obrazovanja djece i adolescenata s posebnim potrebama u Sloveniji pretrpjelo je velike promjene u posljednjih 20 godina. Zakonodavstvo usvojeno 2000. godine (Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnim potrebama, 2000) utvrdilo je uključivanje kao osnovno načelo u ovom području. Sukladno tome, povećava se broj djece i adolescenata s posebnim potrebama koji su uključeni u uobičajene oblike obrazovanja, također slijepih i slabovidnih. Osim toga, još uvijek postoje posebne obrazovne ustanove koje provode programe prilagođene djeci i adolescentima s posebnim potrebama.

Inkluzija nije samo činjenica da je u učionicu ušao novi učenik koji je drugačiji i treba mu više pažnje. Umjesto toga, mora postojati pažljivo isplaniran projekt koji omogućava učenicima s posebnim potrebama da se integriraju u redovno obrazovanje. Uključivanje mora biti planirano i pripremljeno.

Prije nekoliko godina učenica oštećenog vida bila je uključena u prvi razred naše škole. To je bio prvi primjer uključivanja djeteta s ovom vrstom deficita, prepreke ili poremećaja u našu školu. Za sve je stručne djelatnike u školi to bio značajan izazov, također prožet neizvjesnošću i strahom od nepoznatog. Inkluzija u Sloveniji osigurana je obrazovnim programom s prilagođenom provedbom i dodatnom stručnom pomoći, koji se provodi u svim osnovnim školama. Članak predstavlja praktični primjer uključivanja slabovidne učenice u redovnu osnovnu školu.