



INCLUSION IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

**HANDBOOK ON WORKING WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

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REVIEW

The handbook on working with special educational needs students in vocational secondary education was compiled and developed to give a summary of inclusion in vocational secondary education in the Republic of Macedonia. The main purpose of this handbook is to offer strategies or more precisely guidelines for teachers working with special educational needs (SEN) students. The text is written on 72 pages and offers a plethora of reference works in this field, represented in 53 reference units.

In the handbook's introduction, the authors skillfully present the philosophy of inclusive education, the movement towards inclusion and the need for and the inevitability of inclusive societies. They successfully describe the differences between inclusion and integration as two notions and processes that are often used as synonyms and define the principles of inclusive education from a methodological and didactical aspect.

The second chapter in the theoretical foundations of the handbook thoroughly elaborates the systems of education for special educational needs students in Europe as well as the possibilities for finding employment on the labour market after the completion of secondary education.

The third chapter presents the current situation in secondary education in the Republic of Macedonia. The authors make a comprehensive analysis of the accessibility of secondary schools, the prevalence and the inclusion of special educational needs students in schools and give their own point of view and recommendations for improving the processes of inclusion.

The second, technical part of the handbook could be used as a tool for the vocational secondary school teachers in the work with special educational needs students. This section elaborates the need for an inclusion team in every school, the fundamental instruments for evaluation i.e. identification of the special educational needs students as well as the cooperation with parents.

The second chapter of the technical part gives a representation of the various categories and levels of special educational needs persons and the educational implications of the various types of disabilities. This part presents numerous strategies for working with students with intellectual development disorder, students with visual and hearing impairments, students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, students with physical disabilities, students with autism and students with multiple disorders.

The third, and last part of the handbook provides information about the day-to-day work of teachers in inclusive schools in terms of possibilities for adaptation of the syllabus or, more precisely, adaptation of the goals that the special educational needs students in vocational secondary schools should reach. The authors give concrete proposals and examples for developing individualised education plans as a precondition for successful work with these students as well as the way they should be monitored and assessed.

Based on the above-mentioned fact, it is my pleasure to recommend the printing of this handbook.

REVIEWER

Prof. Goran Ajdinski, PhD

INTRODUCTION

The main priorities of the reforms in primary, secondary and higher education in the Republic of Macedonia are to achieve quality, social inclusion and cohesion, and decentralization.

Inclusiveness in the education system in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in the South-East European countries, is a relatively new concept.

The involvement of the European Training Foundation and the Directorate General for Enlargement opened new horizons with the social inclusion project 2008-2011. The project redirected the thinking process, the perception and the plans in the Republic of Macedonia and inclusion was seen to refer to diversity and equality, tolerance and democracy, stereotypes and prejudices, and the right to good quality education for everyone.

Identifying the special needs of every child, the additional educational, and health and social support should be considered part of the process of ensuring that children and young adults are part of the education system and are able to realise their full potential.

The new concept included inclusiveness as an inextricable and key element in the development and implementation of all strategic documents.

Inclusion was unavoidably contained in the development of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in the context of life-long learning 2013-2020 with an Action Plan.¹ Hence, the inclusive education policies, the multi-departmental approach and the experience from the regional and the European initiatives are part of the modern education system for vocational education and training.

The handbook comes as a result of the activities geared towards achieving a higher level of inclusion in the secondary vocational schools envisioned in the Action Plan of the Strategy for Development of the vocational education and training 2013-2020. It was compiled as part of a joint project of the Vocational and Educational Training Centre and the British Council, and supported by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The aim of the handbook is to offer schools, expert services, teachers, parents and students information about inclusion in the secondary vocational education in the Republic of Macedonia, and to explain the role of the various concerned parties in its promotion and implementation. It describes both the potential and the obstacles to progress, taking into account the low stability of schools and the experience of teachers in dealing with special educational needs students in real situations. In addition, it also describes the prejudice that exists in society. The handbook offers possible solutions for working with special educational needs students in school.

The handbook consists of two parts. Part one deals broadly with the technical language specific for this field and is a comprehensive analysis of international documents, and the legislation in the Republic of Macedonia in the field of education of special

¹ See the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in the context of life-long learning 2013-2020 with an Action Plan, Better Skills for Better Tomorrow, MES and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Skopje

educational needs students. It also explains the European models undertaken with special educational needs students and offers an explanation of the current situation with regard to the inclusion of the persons with disabilities in the labour market in Europe after they gain their professional competences.

The text further analyses the current situation of special educational needs students in secondary schools from the aspect of inclusion, accessibility, their involvement and the methodological approach used in their tutoring.

Part two of the handbook offers methods, the need for individualized education plans and ways to help schools and teachers to work with special educational needs students in regular vocational education. The handbook attempts to answer the question: “How to achieve inclusion of special educational needs students in secondary vocational schools?” by offering solutions to schools, parents and teachers.

The handbook should aid the successful management of schools that have special educational needs students and help teachers to achieve better results with such students.

PART I

1. INCLUSION AS A DYNAMIC PROCESS

The tendency in most European Union countries is to develop policies that promote inclusion as an important process in democratic societies, which gives equal opportunities to everyone and maximum flexibility in meeting the specific and social needs of the individual. Having in mind that inclusion is a developing and dynamic process, the developmental level of inclusion in the member states varies. Following the global tendencies and practices, the South-East Balkan countries, including the Republic of Macedonia, face a challenge to steer the national policies towards creating societies that are structurally based on the principle of equal rights for all, according to which every person has equal rights and opportunities, individual differences are respected, and they lead towards building an inclusive society. The general intentions of the Macedonian institutions are to build an inclusive society in terms of abilities, ethnicity and socio-economic inclusion. Progress has been made, although inclusion is a multi-causal conditional process which requires the involvement of resources and time for full institutionalisation and strengthening inclusive culture, policies and practices.

Education, undoubtedly, is one of the fundamental postulates, and without exception, a pillar of every society. The foundations of an inclusive society essentially derive from inclusive education. It is a fact that education produces students who will be the future citizens of the country, and who will bear the overall social developments, changes and values.

In educational terminology, the terms integration (integrated education) and inclusion (inclusive education) are often used alternatively, as if they have the same meaning and describe the same processes. However, due to the vagueness of those terms, the handbook will try to make a clear distinction between the two terms and their different meaning.

1.1. INCLUSION versus INTEGRATION

Integration and inclusion are two different concepts in education.

If integration means “adding” something to a whole that already exists, the integrative approach in the education system considers the student as a problem who is required to fit in the school environment by changing and adapting. In integrated education, the focus is placed on the implementation of the syllabi and the achievements of the student at school level. No focus is placed on the student and his/her specific abilities, knowledge and interests. Figure 1 illustrates the challenges in integrated education as a concept.

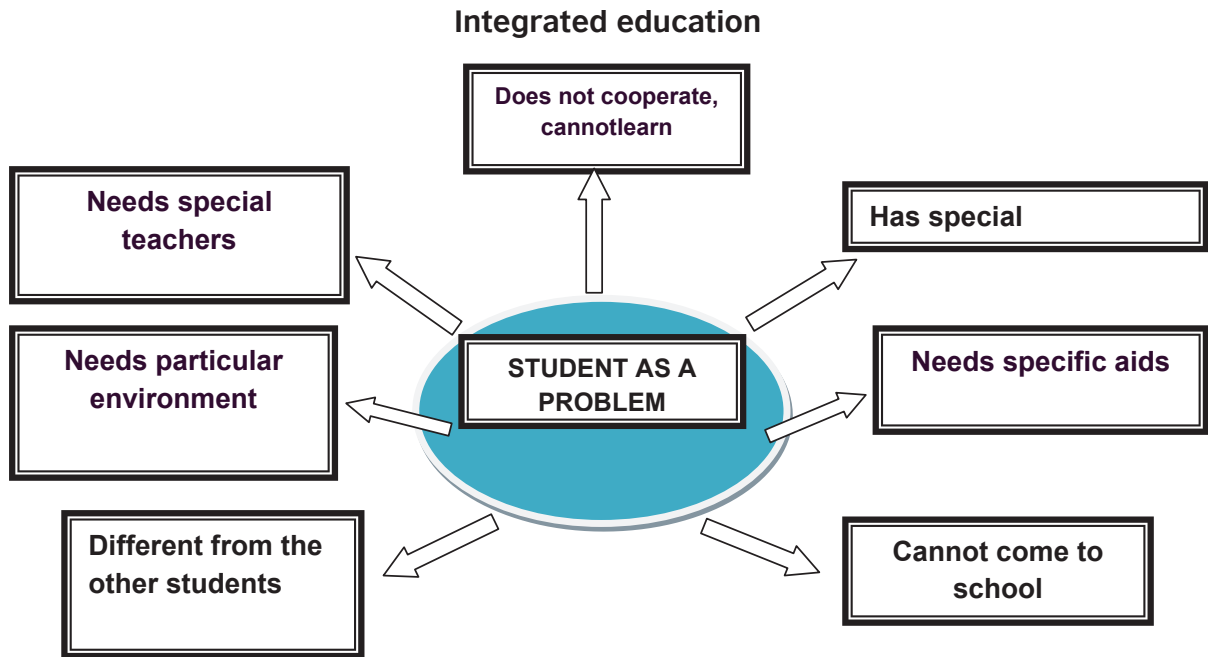


Figure 1. Integrated education (EENET, 1998, IDDC, seminar on inclusive education, Agra, India)

Inclusion is comprehensive, in other words “contained in itself”. The inclusive approach focuses on the entire education system in terms of changing it and adapting it to the individual needs of every student. In education, inclusion is a process of mutual respect; respect for the differences of every student and his/her needs, in which the focus is placed on the student. The education system, on the other hand, should deal with the challenges that all students face, including the special educational needs students.

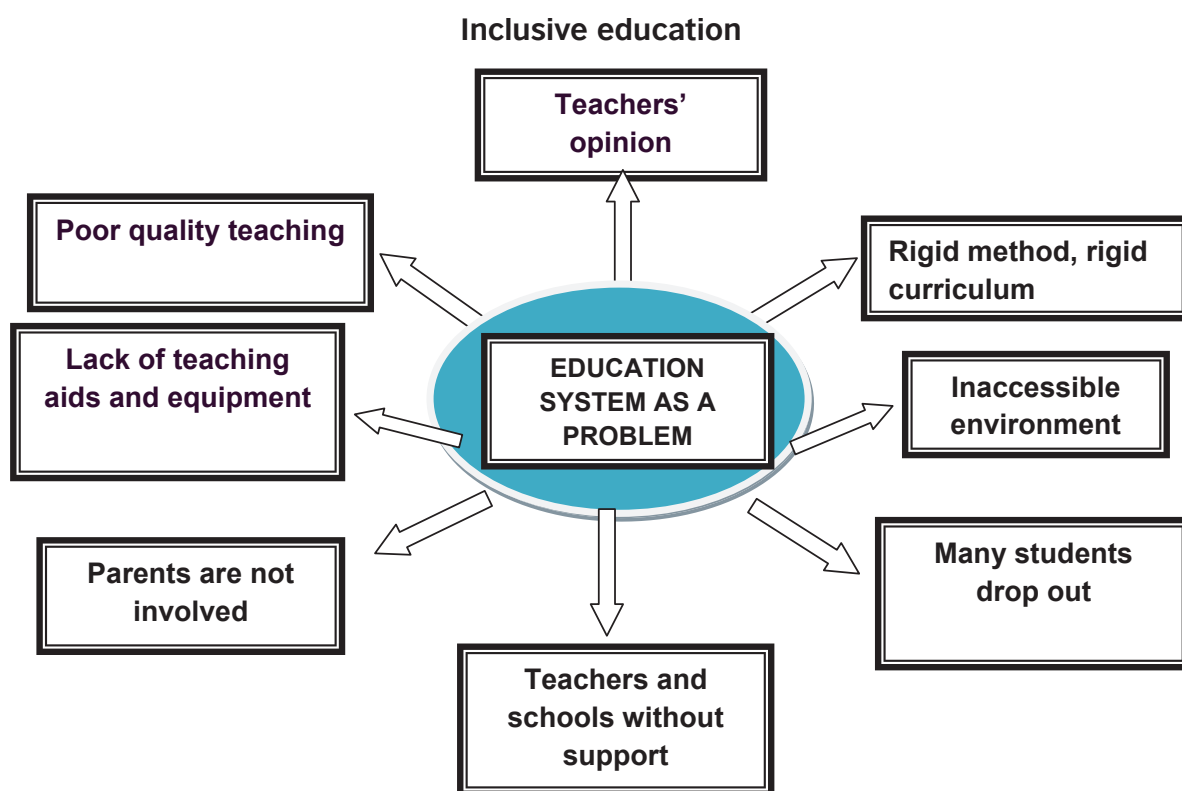


Figure 2. Inclusive education (EENET, 1998, IDDC, seminar on inclusive education, Agra, India)

The difference between educational integration and inclusion according to Miles (Miles 2000) is that integration means “going to school”, whereas inclusion means “participating in school”.

When searching for a comprehensive definition of inclusive education, one finds various approaches, from inclusion of special educational needs students in regular classes, to inclusion and equality of all children (Pasaluc-Kreso, 2003). According to Begeny and Martens (Begeny, Martens, 2007), inclusion in education is the inclusion of all students, regardless of their capabilities and ethnicity, in classes that correspond to their age and schools that meet their needs. Odom and other authors (Odom et al., 2004) simply observe inclusion as programmes or groups in which children with certain disabilities and children that are typically developed participate together. According to Snow (Snow, 2001), inclusion is neither a privilege that is earned nor a right given to individuals. In her opinion, inclusion is mostly a state of mind; it is reciprocal and everyone contributes to the wellbeing of the others in such an environment. If one member only receives or takes, that member is not involved in the process. Some of the definitions, such as that of Farrell (Farrell, 2000) are too restrictive. He examines the term **complete inclusion** according to which the included students play an active and integral part in school life, they are valued as members of the school community and observed as its integral members.

Nowadays, the inclusive concept of education is prioritized worldwide and can be found in numerous documents of various international organisations, such as the United Nations. At the UNESCO conference in Salamanca in 1994 it was concluded that:

“Inclusion is a process of solving and reacting to the various needs of all students, whereby the society as a whole focuses more on the processes of teaching and learning, on the different cultures and communities, so that people feel less excluded from the education system and society in general. The process itself involves the changes and modifications of the content, the approach, the structure and the strategy, with a common vision that encompasses all children of the same age with the only belief that the regular education system is responsible for the education of children.”

The inclusive education system increases the accessibility to education to every child and creates opportunities for good quality education to suit the needs and abilities of every student. The inclusive approach in education should bring about fundamental and substantive changes in schools, i.e. to create **inclusive schools**. This implies resources, financial and staff readiness of schools that can respond to the needs of the completely different students attending regular classes. As a result, it is necessary for all students to work according to a tailored syllabus and be provided with aids adapted to their abilities, needs and talents. However, one should also not forget the student's personality and his/her unique characteristics.

Inclusive education puts special emphasis on the group of students that are at risk of marginalization, exclusion or low attainment. The inclusive development of schools should be a continuous process that would bring about permanent changes in the organisational structure, the teaching process and the pedagogical approach. The **index of inclusion**² is used in schools for self-appraisal, evaluation and for developing inclusiveness.

1.2. Cycle of empowerment

Overcoming marginalisation presupposes developing policies, measures and applied programmes, especially in the field of education and employment, that will offer the individual (regardless of personal abilities, ethnicity or social and economic situation) equal opportunities and will encourage him/her towards independence, personal development and an active life. Strengthening the network of representation in all institutions at central and local level, developing and respecting codes of conduct in all institutions, including schools, contribute to creating a pleasant environment for everyone.

² The index of inclusion is a result of the cooperation between the Centre of Studies on Inclusive Education – Bristol, the Centre for Educational needs – Manchester and the Centre for Educational Research – Canterbury. The first version was published in 2000 and was used only in the UK. The upgraded version was released in 2002 which implemented the suggestions of the UK schools that used the index. Today it is used in many countries in the world. There is not only one right way to use the index of inclusion. Each school determines the way it would use the index. It enables studying and developing the school's inclusiveness through three interlinked dimensions: creating inclusive culture, creating inclusive policies and developing inclusive practices.

Monitoring the inclusive education in society should be a continuous process in order to ascertain the reality, thus timely overcome the barriers that would lead to successful involvement of all students in the regular education system. It is very important to exchange information and experiences with countries that provide a good example and implement adequate models for inclusion in social processes in general, with a special emphasis on education. Similarly, it is of significant importance to raise awareness and teach about human rights in terms of education for all. The international human rights instruments offer a global common understanding based on recognition of the inalienable value and dignity of all people, which can provide a framework that surpasses individual cultures, communities and nations. The framework can help everyone, including teachers and students, to focus on **the common values** shared by all.

The proclaimed principles that are incorporated in the inclusion and are present in the groups of self-advocacy that exist in the Republic of Macedonia (such as organisations or associations that support individuals that are marginalized on various grounds) play an important role in the process of empowerment. Figure 4 illustrates the cycle of empowerment as an important cycle in the process of inclusion.

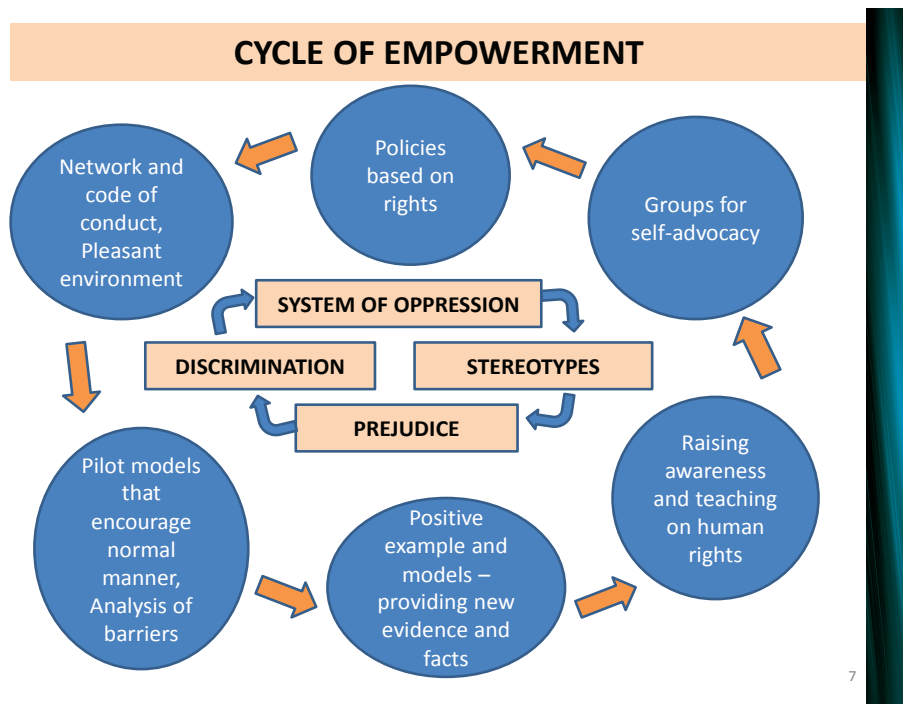


Figure 4. Cycle of empowerment

1.3. Treatment of persons with disabilities throughout history

The behaviour towards persons with disabilities has undergone various phases throughout the history of societies, ranging from complete discrimination, a sympathetic

approach, to final recognition. Until the XIX century this conduct generally followed two directions. In the first case, persons with disabilities remained in the families, far from the public eye, hidden, and were considered a shame to the family. In the second case, they were separated from their families and taken to special institutions where they were provided with food and accommodation, left without any expert treatment, regardless of the type of disability. Until the 1980s, there is no mention of any expert pedagogical work carried out with persons with disabilities, then known as handicapped people. Every separation from the family and the local environment is considered **segregation**, because the child is left without his family. In the developmental stage of a child who already has certain difficulties, such separation leads to additional negative consequences. As a result, proper conditions were created for various types of community care, where the person with disabilities, after the treatment or the work engagement, returned to the family and felt as its integral part.

The main reasons for segregation of the persons with various types of disabilities by their peers in regular schools were their impairments, deficiencies and difficulties.

In the late 1960s the world began re-evaluating the ethical justification of the process of separation of the persons with various disabilities from the rest of the population. In the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the critical re-evaluation of the segregating education system, its deficiencies and failures, the concept of normalization and **integration** was introduced.

The attempts to involve the children with disabilities in the regular education system date back to the 1980s, when the first programmes for inclusion of all children were developed in the northern Canadian provinces. The term “inclusion” was used for the first time in the 1990s.

On a global level, the inclusion of *all students* in regular schools regardless of their abilities, ethnicity or socio-economic conditions in which they live and develop, is part of the great global human rights movement which champions full involvement of all special needs persons in society.

1.4. Aspects of inclusive education for special educational needs students

The experts and the institutions in our region have a very narrow understanding of the concept of “inclusive education”. The public, in general, perceives “inclusive education” as education for special needs students (Spasovski, 2010).³ We will therefore elaborate on the aspects of inclusive education and define the term “special educational needs”.

³ See Spasovski, O., Ballazhi, S. and Friedman, E. (2010) Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity: Macedonia Country Report. Turin: European Training Foundation.

Inclusion is a concept which is very often associated with students with disabilities, i.e. with students with “special educational needs”. However, it should be underlined that inclusion refers to education of all children and young people.

The use of the term “obstacles to learning and involvement”, which refers to the difficulties students face, unlike the term “special educational needs students”, is part of the social model that refers to learning difficulties and disabilities. It is completely opposite from the medical model, according to which difficulties in education arise from the student’s deficiency or some impairment. In accordance with the social model, the obstacles to learning and involvement could be part of the student’s nature of adaptation and be derived from the student’s interaction in certain contexts: with other people, policies, institutions, cultures, and social and economic circumstances that influence their lives. Schools can do little to improve the state of disability, however, they can contribute a lot to reducing the obstacles and the discriminating opinions that further aggravate the disability.⁴

The inclusive approach in teaching and learning is built on the basis of respecting the differences between students. This should entail deep alterations in everything that takes place in the classroom, the staffrooms, playgrounds, and the relationship with the students’ parents or guardians. In order for these changes to be possible and to ensure the involvement of all students in education, it is important to focus on the student’s personality as a whole. If we focus on one aspect of personality only, such as the disability only, full involvement will certainly be neglected. The person with disabilities could be excluded if emphasis is put on what that person cannot do, or if his/her interests and abilities are not identified and taken into account during the implementation of the syllabus.⁵

Minimizing the obstacles to learning and involvement of all students presupposes mobilization of resources in schools and the immediate environment. The obstacles could be of various nature in the schools, but at the same time they could be resources of support. This support can be detected in students, parents, municipalities, teachers, and in policies and practices, because there are always more resources of support than those implemented in the actual environment and situations. Having in mind these facts, one could conclude that resources do not always mean funding.

1.4.1. Who are special educational need students?

The term “special educational needs” refers to children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make learning and access to education difficult, unlike most of the persons of the same age.⁶

⁴ Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, [Online], Available from URL: <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf>

⁵ Booth, T. Ainscow, M. (2002) „*Index of inclusion*“, CSIE, p. 4

⁶ Government of United Kingdom, [Online], Available from URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_4008600

In the Macedonian model of inclusive education, the group of special educational needs students includes:

- students with intellectual development disorder
- blind and visually impaired students
- deaf and hard of hearing students
- students with speech disorder
- students with physical disability
- chronically ill students
- students with asocial behaviour
- students with learning difficulties
- students with emotional problems
- students with no parents
- students from chaotic households
- students from culturally deprived families
- students who do not know the target language
- students of refugees and displaced persons
- gifted students.⁷

Each of these groups has its own characteristics and every special educational needs student has personal, individual, and typical characteristics that make him/her unique.

1.5. Principles of Inclusive Education

The principles of inclusive education as a permanent orientation to act in a certain way are very difficult to be separated because the majority of the pedagogical principles apply here as well. According to Suzic (Suzic, N. 2008), based on their essence and priority, the following principles of inclusive education are indisputable:

- ***Principle of social acceptance and support***

The principle of social acceptance and support is very important for the life and progress of special educational needs students because it encompasses socialization, inclusion and interaction of the special educational needs with their peers. The research of Odom et al. (Odom et al., 2006) shows that the ability to solve cognitive and social problems is greater among students who are socially accepted rather than among students who are socially rejected. This research also shows that the special needs students must interact with their peers and thus be put in a situation where they can feel all the problems of social acceptance and conflicts. In this constellation of sensitive relations, the role of the teacher

⁷ Nacionalna programa za razvoj na obrazovaniето vo Republika Makedonija, 2005 – 2015, [Online], Available from URL: <http://www.npro.edu.mk/dokumenti/strategija-mk.pdf>

in regular classes is very important, because teachers can do and achieve many things that parents and special schools cannot via the student community.

- ***Principle of early intervention and rehabilitation***

Early identification of a child's problem is of great importance for the special needs students. Facing this challenge in its early stages allows parents and students to focus on solving all problems related to individual activities and to the interaction with the peers. Early support to the special needs children is an ethical and legal obligation not only of the parents and the professionals, but of the society as a whole. Rehabilitation is part of early support that provides preconditions for the special needs children to reach their highest potentials, regardless of how modest they may be. The principle of early intervention and rehabilitation will be met only when the child has been given the opportunity to interact with his/her peers, by paying special attention to the activities the student is most capable of doing.

Adults bear and overcome deficiencies of any kind much easier. In a situation when a student is searching for his/her identity, the situation is complex because the student finds it difficult to cope with the fact that he/she would not be able to do some things in his/her life. When this situation refers to a special needs person, the deficiency is seen as a particular trauma, because before starting education, the student often notices that he/she cannot do various things that his/her peers can. In this context, individualisation comes to the fore, and individualisation does not only mean adaptation of the curriculum content, but subtle support through a series of steps and methods that would help these students.

- ***Principle of functional development of abilities***

Functional development of abilities is the development of the abilities that the child possesses by utilizing them in his further development and education. In order to achieve functional development of abilities, an individualised plan should be developed for the special needs child that would base its content on the student's individual needs. Such an individualised plan that incorporates adequate approaches and models of work will enable the child to do what he/she can, and in this way, he/she will gradually develop his/her abilities. Because of this, the functional development of abilities is based more on implementation, work, and activities rather than on theoretical learning, memorization and reproduction.

- ***Principle of stimulation and compensation***

The principle of stimulation and compensation is based on the special educational needs students' motivation. Both inner and outer motivation contribute to the efficiency of most activities of these students. Many activities that stimulate the students who have no intellectual disorders could be frustrating for the special educational needs students.

Due to these findings, teachers or specialist pedagogues should find suitable activities and tasks that would be stimulating for the special educational needs students, too.

1.6. Legal aspects in terms of inclusion of special educational needs students

The right to education for all children and young people is universal and it is guaranteed and regulated in many international and national declarations and documents.

The right to education for the persons with disabilities is covered by Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which our country ratified in 2011.⁸

The content summarised in this article is one of the most specific parts of the Convention and it includes the intellectual and creative development of the persons with disabilities, and the training for efficient and independent life and inclusion. According to the Convention, the education and training of children and young people with disabilities should be an integral part of the sole education system that will remove the obstacles for equal access to good quality education for the persons with disabilities and will ensure adequate conditions for their inclusion in the education system. The Convention presents numerous comprehensive and precise guidelines about what the right to education for the persons with disabilities entails and envisages various concrete measures that the signatory states must implement with the Convention.

The conceptual framework on human rights that is based on education for all (UNICEF, 2007) is also an important document that underlines the right to access to education, the right to good quality education and the right of respect within the learning environment.

Another important document is the *Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and Protocol 11, together with protocols 1, 4, 6, 7, 12, and 13* which state that everyone should enjoy rights and freedom without discrimination, regardless of gender, race, skin colour, language, religion, political and other beliefs, national or social background, national minority, ownership, or other statuses.

In Macedonia, the current concept of education and training for special educational needs persons is regulated and integrated in the *Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education, the Law on Educational Inspection* as well as other strategic documents, and is based on the highest legal act, the *Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia*.

In the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the part on economic, social and cultural rights also regulates the right to education, which states:

“Everyone has the right to education. Education is accessible to everyone under equal conditions.”

⁸ **Konvencija za pravata na licata so invalidnost, Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika** [Online]. Available from URL: <http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Konvencija%20za%20pravata%20na%20licata%20so%20invalidnost.pdf>

The *Law on Secondary Education* does not mention disabilities as possible grounds for discrimination. The secondary education of students with disabilities has the same features of the existing primary education. In addition, Article 39 of this law offers possibilities for students with special educational needs to be taught by using adapted programmes for particular vocations or training, in specialized secondary schools for students with visual and hearing impairments, and intellectual development disorders.

The work of the teachers who work with special educational needs students is also valued based on the Law on Educational Inspection. In accordance with this Law (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” number 52/2005, 81/2008, 148/09 and 57/2010) and the Statute for educational supervision, a Guidebook that offers an assessment for regulating the responsibilities of teachers and experts in primary and secondary education was developed. Item 1.2 of the document *Instruments for evaluating the primary and secondary school teacher’s responsibilities* states:

“The teacher is allocated five points if he/she is teaching classes that include special educational needs students (with inclusion).”

The National Programme for Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015, as a strategic education document, defines the mission in the field of education as:

“Education for all by ensuring educational equality; increasing opportunities for participation; increasing educational, cultural and economic competitiveness of the Macedonian society.”

In addition, the National Programme also envisages a global matrix of teacher’s competences in terms of development of students, respect of students’ individual differences, building mutual trust and respect, development of support systems for students with learning disabilities and helping each student, and creating conditions so that students could enjoy their achievements.

In 2001, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the *National Strategy on Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia* (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no.101/01), which is based on a thorough comprehension and analysis of the need the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to adopt adequate decisions for protection, education, rehabilitation, training and employment of disabled persons.

This National Strategy on standardization of the rights of persons with disabilities was revised 2010-2018. It represents a plan for numerous activities that arise from the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that the United Nations adopted on 13 December 2006, which regulates the rights and the needs of the persons with disabilities, and the participation of the main stakeholders (such as the line ministries, institutions and civil organizations) in its implementation.

All of the above measures reflect the country’s efforts to include all persons regardless of their disabilities in all areas of life. This tendency of the institutions in charge

implies: inclusion of persons with disabilities in all levels of education; individual support given to people with disabilities so that they exercise the right to education; and ensuring conditions for a well-thought out education process that would enable further inclusion of persons with disabilities in all areas of public life.⁹

2. EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS

2.1. European models of inclusive education for special educational needs students

The systems of inclusive education in Europe have been developed for several decades, however, there is no single education system for the persons with disabilities. In some countries, such as Sweden, Spain and Greece, all children with disabilities are enrolled in regular schools. In other countries, such as Slovenia, France, the Czech Republic and Slovakia there are two systems that provide comprehensive educational services as well as great support to the persons with disabilities. Countries such as Belgium and Switzerland have kept the system of special education with special schools or special classes.

A state decree from 2004 in Belgium allows three forms of inclusion of the children with disabilities in the regular system of formal education and they are:

- Full permanent inclusion
- Partial permanent inclusion
- Temporary inclusion

The *full* permanent inclusion allows the students with disabilities to attend regular schools with support from special schools. This is carried out based on the opinion of a General council for synchronization of special education, while the decision to sign a Protocol on Inclusion is jointly made by the council of the class, the management service, the parents and a team of teachers. The conditions for cancelling or changing the form of inclusion are clearly prescribed. Transport to school is provided.

With the *partial* permanent inclusion the students with disabilities during the entire year attend certain classes in regular schools, while the remainder of the syllabus is carried out in special schools.

In *temporary* inclusion students attend all or certain classes in regular schools for a part of the school year.

It is believed that the entire education system is inclusive, while the formal education system is flexible and allows full vertical mobility in accordance with the students' needs.

⁹ <http://www.soros.org.mk/CMS/Files/Documents/FOOM-Nevodlivi-za-opstestvoto-MK.pdf>

Various methods and ways of organising classes are applied. Special focus is put on team work, continuous professional upgrading and development of professionals and working with parents.

The government in the UK makes particular efforts and promotes inclusion in education of all potential vulnerable and marginalized children, not just students with disabilities. Regular schools cannot make any discrimination through the syllabi (homework, excursions) and have to ensure accessibility for the students with disabilities, whether they are involved in the schools or not. Special focus is put on the expertise and the specialization of the staff working with these students.

Around 2% in total of all students in Europe attend special schools or classes. Many countries transform the special schools into resource centres that would provide training for teachers, develop syllabi, give support to the students and the schools and connect the students who have graduated with the labour market. In Cyprus the Law on Education from 1999 prescribes that the new special schools should be built in the vicinity of regular schools, in order to ensure contact and interaction and promote inclusion where possible.¹⁰

One of the goals of education for all students in most of the Western European countries is “achieving independent and individual functioning.”¹¹

The European Union has a comprehensive approach towards the problems of special educational needs persons, which means it first identifies the problems and then defines and develops a strategy. Apart from the strategy, the European Union and the European Commission in particular support all activities geared towards this population.

2.1.1. Inclusion in the labour market in Europe after the persons with disabilities gain their professional competence

Inclusion means that all people in a community can participate in all aspects of life, i.e. in education, work, leisure time activities and can live a self-determined life. However, there are significant barriers to vocational education and training (VET) and employment for Learners with Learning disabilities and/or Disabilities throughout Europe. The low level of completed education or insufficient further education deeply affect disabled people's progression into employment. People with disabilities represent around one-sixth of the EU's overall working-age population, but their employment rate is comparatively low.

Disabled people are almost twice as likely to be inactive in comparison to non-disabled people. In the UK, 24% of disabled people and just 10% of non-disabled people have no qualification. 11% of disabled people have been classified as living in ‘persistent poverty.’ UK statistics show that a considerable number of disabled young people are not involved in education, employment or training.¹²

¹⁰ www.european-agency.org

¹¹ Brooks-Gunn, Denner&Klebanov,1994. According to Čolin, T. 2005

¹² Disability Review, Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2008

Across Europe there is no common definition of special educational needs (SEN). In the UK, Vocational Education Training providers such as colleges, training and adult community learning providers use the term learners with learning disabilities and/or disabilities. Yet - even in the UK - school, post-school and higher education sectors all use different terminology when defining this cohort. A Europe-wide common terminology would create a framework for comparative studies as well as ensuring a clearer understanding among professionals and families alike.

With more help and understanding, millions of disabled Europeans could enter or re-enter the jobs market. In the UK, person-centred planning has over the past 30 years helped to support people with disabilities to live self-determined lives in their communities. Person-centred planning is a process that requires continual listening and learning, focusing on what is important to someone now and in the future, and acting upon this together with the person's family and friends. In the UK, the government policy, *'Putting People First'*, states that person-centred planning must become mainstream for all people with disabilities.

Similarly, in 2010, the European Commission adopted the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. The European principle is: *'Nothing about disabled people without disabled people'*. Successful VET for learners with learning disabilities and/or disabilities requires effective implementation of person-centred planning to be addressed at every stage in education and training from elementary to secondary education, the final aim being independent living and work.

'New Paths to Inclusion' was a European *Leonardo* project funded within the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union from October 2009 to September 2011. It aimed to foster inclusion of people with disabilities through a person-centred approach and seek ways to address the main barriers to full and effective implementation such as:

- the absence of long-term coordinated and certified training programmes
- the implementation gap within service-providers.
- the absence of sustainable support structures on a regional and national level.

To bring about change, VET systems need to empower disabled people to facilitate their progress into employment. Structural developments within VET can overcome barriers and enable these learners to fully participate in VET. One such example is having access to high quality and impartial advice for progression planning. In the UK, the State-funded careers service, *Connexions*, works with young people aged up to 25 with learning difficulties or disabilities to help them access education and training. *Connexions* provides key workers to help learners with learning difficulties or disabilities make a successful transition from school to VET.

Schools and colleges can raise expectations for learners with learning disabilities and/or disabilities and help them to develop skills for employment through promoting volunteering and work based learning opportunities. Volunteering as a route into

employment has been highlighted by the UK Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other qualitative research in the area suggests that benefits include learning new skills, increasing confidence and developing or maintaining work habits. [Corden, A. and Sainsbury, R, 2005, *Volunteering for Employment Skills: A qualitative research study*, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, York. Gaskin K (2004) *Volunteering and availability for work: an evaluation of the change to Jobseeker's Allowance regulations* - A report to the UK Department for Work and Pensions.]

Another way to improve access to employment and life opportunities is to offer and provide programmes that include work experience, supported employment, and enterprise and job coaching. In the UK, examples of programmes that have shown real progression into work for disabled people are *Project Search* and *Getting a Life*. To qualify for funding from the state, work experience must be timetabled, organised and/or supervised by the institution and within that institution's normal working pattern and offered by an external employer.

Successful models of VET for special educational needs persons require more emphasis placed on progress towards opportunities of acceptance in society when it comes to employment, further learning and independent living for the individual.

2.2. Organisation of education and training for special educational needs students in the Republic of Macedonia

The education and training of special educational needs students in the Republic of Macedonia is organised in special institutions and schools, in special classes within regular schools, and in "regular classes" together with their peers.

The Law on Primary Education gives the opportunity to special educational needs students to attend regular classes. Special educational needs students who attend regular primary classes enroll in regular secondary schools after completing their primary education. Thus, the number of special educational needs students in the regular secondary schools grows every year.

However, in Macedonia, the education and training of special educational needs students is also carried out in special institutions that are an integral part of the sole education system. These schools have identical or very similar goals and principles and completely follow the pattern of regular education:

- * special preschool training and education;
- * special primary education and
- * special vocational secondary education

I. Special preschool education and training

In preschool education, preparatory classes are offered for children with visual and hearing impairments, intellectual development disorders, physical disabilities, chronic illnesses and autism in special primary schools and in special classes within regular schools.

II. Special primary education

In Macedonia, special primary schools and special classes in regular schools offer education to persons with visual and hearing impairments, intellectual development disorder, autism, anti-social behaviour and to persons with physical disabilities.

III. Special vocational secondary education

The special vocational secondary education is carried out in special vocational institutions for students with visual and hearing impairments and for students who have intellectual development disorder.

3. CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

In the Republic of Macedonia, secondary education is carried out in 99 institutions, 39 of which are vocational schools, 34 are mixed (vocational and high schools), 16 high schools, 5 art schools, 1 sports school and 4 institutions for special educational needs students. Guided by the principle of education for all, Macedonia recognizes the right to adequate education, in accordance with the students' abilities, regardless of the level of their disability. Precisely those four institutions for special educational needs students ensure the inclusion of the students with moderate and severe disabilities in the education system, thus explicitly allowing them to achieve adequate success through proper models of organised special coaching.

3.1. Inclusion in secondary vocational education in the Republic of Macedonia

In the last two decades, starting with the Phare programme in 1998 up to the twinning project for Modernization of the vocational education and training system in 2013, the Republic of Macedonia has paid special attention to the development of vocational training and the changes and improvements of the vocational education system with one goal - to produce cadre that is in demand on the jobs market.

Apart from the reforms specific for vocational education, one of the main reforms in the Macedonian education system was the introduction of compulsory secondary education

from 2008/2009. The introduction of compulsory secondary education increased the number of students in regular education, and this in turn increased the need for inclusive education and inclusive schools. According to Spasovski (Spasovski, 2010), the group of students at risk of exclusion from the compulsory education system are: students who are members of the Romany ethnic community, girls, especially ethnic Albanian and ethnic Turkish, special needs students, students with serious health issues, and students from rural, isolated and remote areas. There are numerous possible barriers to inclusive education: financial, institutional, structural, socio-economic and political. However, a big leap has been made in terms of inclusion:

- free books and transport from the place of residence to the school for the children enrolled in secondary education are offered;
- a system of mentorship and tutorship has been established, as well as scholarships for impoverished students, especially for Romany students;
- conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have been introduced for children from impoverished families who attend secondary schools regularly;
- A system for measuring the implemented activities in the area of interethnic integration in schools has been introduced, etc.

The research supported by the Faculty of Electrical Engineering (ETF) and carried out by national experts in 2013, “Mapping of VET educational policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion”, provided a series of conclusions and recommendations for improving inclusion in the secondary vocational education. According to the research, opportunities for education for special educational needs students are limited. This is mainly because of the lack of necessary physical capacities in the schools, but it is also due to the widespread idea that the special needs students should not mix with the other students in regular education.¹³

These problems and some of the recommendations from the research were incorporated in the Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Context of Life-Long Learning 2013-2020, with an Action Plan. This handbook was compiled in order to achieve a higher level of development in the area of inclusion.

3.2. Special educational needs students in regular vocational training

The enrollment and attendance of special educational needs students in both regular primary and secondary education is legally regulated with the right to education

¹³ See Mapping of VET educational policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion in the Western Balkans, Turkey and Israel Country report: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2013

for special educational needs students in regular education. Relevant research¹⁴ in the field of education shows that in the academic 2009/2010, in 83.6% of the primary schools, there were special educational needs students, while 55% of the secondary schools special educational needs students attended classes in 2013/2014. Inclusion of special educational needs students does not only mean physical accommodation of these students in regular education, but also their active participation in learning the educational content and the functioning of the school. This is achieved by ensuring various conditions for them, hence the question: “To what extent are the schools prepared for real inclusion of special educational needs students?”. The attempts for inclusion are based on the accessibility to the teaching process, the principle of social acceptance, support, individualization and stimulation. Thus, the inclusion of special educational needs students could be seen as a two-way process, which on one hand, refers to the identification, reduction and elimination of the barriers for participation in class (accessible environment) and, on the other, to increased participation in the learning process (quality of teaching), which ensure optimal development in all spheres for every student.

In order to get relevant indicators for the accessibility of secondary vocational schools for special educational needs students and the percentage and involvement of these students in vocational schools, a research was carried out based on a previously determined methodology, which provided data for more than 70% of the secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

The research detected the drawbacks and the challenges that schools and teachers face in the process of education for special educational needs students and identified the problems that hinder the educational process when it comes to the inclusion of the special educational needs students.

3.3. Accessibility of schools

Accessibility in the context of inclusion of special educational needs students is a term that describes the degree to which the environment, the device, the product or the service meet the needs of the greatest number of students possible.

The impossibility to use public transportation, the absence of audible traffic signals at crossroads, the absence of ramps and inclined access pathways, and unadapted premises are some of the physical barriers that special educational needs students face. In addition, resources that are at the schools’ disposal, such as special didactic materials and aids, and the support to teachers with information from this field are also part of the school’s accessibility.

¹⁴ See Национално истражување за проценка на потребите од асистивна информатичка технологија во основното образование 2009-2010 година, Отворете ги прозорците, УСАИД, Скопје

The results of the research in terms of the physical aspects as well as in the sense of resources at the schools' disposal provided information about the preparedness of secondary vocational schools to include special educational needs students.

Appendix 1 presents the results of the surveyed vocational schools and shows that some of them are making efforts to ensure suitable conditions for the inclusion of special educational needs students. However, this is not the case in all schools.

3.4. Representation and involvement of special educational needs students in secondary vocational schools

In the context of the research, representation is the total number of special educational needs students who attend regular vocational education, regardless of the methods used during their educational process. Involvement is a process of individual and continual work with the special educational needs students whose purpose is learning the prescribed educational content and achieving the expected results.

The research provides data only for certain categories of special educational needs students, due to the fact that in schools, the term "special educational needs students" is often identified with the term "students with developmental disabilities".

3.4.1. Representation of special educational needs students

Research has shown that in the academic 2013/2014, in 55% of secondary schools that offer vocational training there are special educational needs students. Many of these schools are located outside Skopje. On average, in every school there are 4 to 5 special educational needs students.

Out of the total number of special educational needs students who attend vocational schools, the majority have problems with reading and writing. Some have intellectual difficulties, but there are also students with behaviour disorders (Appendix 2).

The research observed the distribution of special educational needs students by vocation and the results showed that the representation is unequal for all vocations. In some, such as the medical and the mining-geological schools, there are no special educational needs students. However, there is greater representation of special needs students in the agricultural-veterinary schools. Appendix 3 graphically shows the representation of special educational needs students by vocation.

The results also showed that students with certain disabilities are not part of a particular educational vocation. Students with various disabilities were registered in different vocations, both in the three-year and the four-year vocational education (Appendix 4).

The research also showed that special needs students did not choose a particular vocational school to gain adequate competences for that particular vocation. The school was chosen based on the distance from the place of residence.

Despite the useful data provided by this research for identifying potential deficiencies, and the challenges and difficulties that the teaching staff and the schools face, they are not 100 percent relevant. Judging by the answers of the surveyed schools, the majority, or 70% of them do not request findings from the Mental Health Institute when enrolling special educational needs students. In addition, no standard procedures exist in the schools that can identify and monitor the special educational needs students. The schools use various sources of information or they follow their own, arbitrary estimates when submitting data to the VETC (Vocational and Educational Training Centre).

3.4.2. Involvement/Inclusion of special educational needs students

The involvement of SENs (further on “special educational needs students”) in the secondary vocational education starts with the “proper” selection of a career (vocation and profile) based on the type and level of disability.

In most EU countries, every special educational needs student registered as a person with special educational needs, is professionally guided based on their abilities, skills, needs and motivation before completing the eighth/ninth grade. The research results also show whether the special educational needs students in Macedonia are advised before enrolling in regular secondary education and to what extent their choice is adequate. Special educational needs students who enroll in 70% of the secondary schools do not submit any documentation to prove their disability or the category of disability. When choosing the school, the vocation and the profile, the approach is completely individual (the student or the parents make the choice). In only 50% of the secondary vocational schools, the school makes the effort to advise the parents and the special educational needs students when choosing the vocation/profile.

The process of identifying special educational needs students is even more difficult as there are no standard procedures that will identify and monitor them. The parents “cooperate”, but they do have second thoughts in the process of declaratively registering their child as a student with learning disabilities.

Judging by the research results, the teachers are not trained to identify special educational needs students nor work with them, and the reality is that they have to work with them without any guidelines and training. In the schools that employ a psychologist, teachers usually ask for help. In almost all of the vocational schools there are no employed special education experts (defectologists) who could adequately help both the teachers and the parents when working with special educational needs students. There are cases when the teachers show initiative and ask for methodological and pedagogical assistance from the institutions specialized in working with special needs students. In 30% of the schools

the teachers are not informed and do not know what an individualized education plan is, while 98% of them in vocational schools have received no training in working with special educational needs students.

It should be also underlined that the large number of students per class has a negative influence when it comes to the involvement of the special educational needs students because teachers are unable to pay adequate attention to them.

3.5. Conclusion and recommendations

According to the collated data, special educational needs students are physically present in vocational schools. If integration means “attending school”, and inclusion means “participation in school”, then one can conclude that the vocational education in Macedonia is more of an integrative than an inclusive process which requires interventions and measures for inclusion of special educational needs students.

The measures and interventions that should be undertaken refer to the educational institutions, schools and teachers.

Recommendations for educational institutions

Educational institutions as bearers of the policies in the education and training process should undertake steps to improve inclusion in secondary education. The steps should move in the following direction:

- developing a Strategy for inclusion of special educational needs students in secondary education as a compulsory level of education. The strategy should determine the criteria for the level of disability for full inclusion, in other words the limitations to inclusion in terms of the degree/level of disability. It should project and standardize the procedures for identification and monitoring of special educational needs students in regular classes.
- finding a model for hiring a defectologist in every school as an integral part of the inclusive education team in order to provide assistance to the teachers who work with special educational needs students.

Recommendations for schools

Schools, as institutions where education and training is carried out, should undertake activities for improving inclusion. The steps should be in the following direction:

- strengthening the schools' capacities by providing training for teachers and specialist staff; advising the students to accept students who are different (reducing stereotypes and prejudice) to provide a positive environment and atmosphere in the school;

- establishing teams for inclusion that would be in charge of identifying, registering and monitoring special educational needs students in the process of learning the educational content. This team would provide support to the teachers working with special educational needs students;
- ensuring cooperation with the parents and cooperation with the local community¹⁵;
- providing technical and material conditions (architectural interventions) that would enable special educational needs students to use assistive technology depending on their needs.

Recommendations for teachers

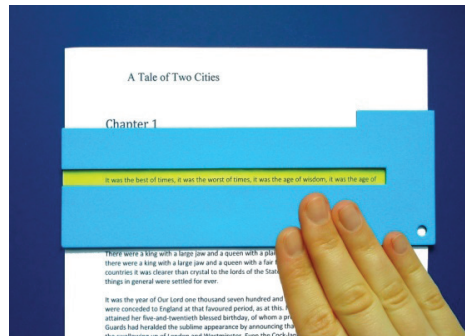
Teachers, as the key factor in the teaching process, should focus on the following activities:

- cooperation with the team for educational inclusion, as well as the other teachers in order to exchange experiences about the progress of special educational needs students;
- cooperation with parents to achieve the set goals for the special educational needs students;
- provide differentiated instruction if there are special educational needs students in the class;
- compile an individualised education plan according to the type of disability and the level of previous achievements.

¹⁵ See Петрушев.Г.,(2012) Како до инклузивна општина, Сојуз на дефектолози на РМ

PART II

An inclusive school is a school in which:
all students are welcome,
all parents are involved,
all teachers are respected



1. HOW TO ACHIEVE INCLUSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS IN SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS?

Inclusion represents undertaking a series of strategies to achieve reasonable adaptation of special needs persons to the environment and the world. It is not only seen as a transition of children and young people from special institutions to regular schools, but it pervades all areas and aspects of life. This implies that establishment of a new culture that will spread ideas for equality and fairness, and a culture that will provide reasonable adaptations that are necessary in all areas of people's everyday lives, and not only at school level.

This culture comprises:

- joint work of all people who deal with special needs persons;
- cooperation, planning and instruction that is not confined only to the classroom;
- developing new strategies for work in all areas of life;
- ideas for the future of all people, and not just for the special needs persons;
- transfer of expertise about the nature of the specific needs of special needs persons in everyday life.

Inclusion is interdisciplinary teamwork which, apart from involving professionals working in schools and striving for social interaction with peers, should, first of all, create new environments that would not be new only for the special needs students, but for all participants.

The successful inclusion of special needs students in regular classes, among other things, implies significant participation of all persons who deal with special needs students. It also implies cooperation, planning and learning, development of new strategies, comprehensive reflection on the future of special needs students and exchanging expertise and knowledge about the nature of the special needs in everyday life.

The essence of inclusion is to have a feeling of belonging, which is what every human being needs.

1.1. Changes in schools – fundamental moving force of inclusion

Inclusion should be understood as a dynamic and continuous process of changes in which the school has an important mission: "inclusion of all students in school work". Changes in school cannot happen overnight, because this is a process, and the process brings about changes over a longer period of time. Thus, one is to be aware that it takes time for the new ideas and novelties to be absorbed and mastered and that the process of their acceptance requires time. When it comes to complex institutions such as schools,

social psychologists claim that it could take from three to five years to completely adopt something new.¹⁶

In order for the school's mission to be successful, and to build a successful inclusive secondary school:

- the school principals should continuously encourage their staff, initiate and support novelties, take into consideration staff proposals, talk with them about important decisions, work on creating a positive working atmosphere in the school, and raise awareness for accepting similarities and respecting differences among students;
- teachers should cooperate with each other, communicate with students and parents, use adequate educational materials, aids, various models of instruction and implement differentiated or individualised instruction;
- the team for inclusion, coordinated by the team coordinator, should function and work successfully;
- the school, as an educational institution, should adopt a rulebook on individualisation of instruction. The individualisation of instruction is planned and introduced in the education and training system as a means of support to students who cannot reach their expected optimum due to some disability. This, in turn, encourages motivation and progress in the education process;
- the school should strive towards accessibility and adaptation of the space available in terms of providing adequate conditions for individual needs depending on the type of the student's disability (installing wheelchair ramps, more room for maneuvering wheelchairs, elevator, equipping schools with necessary didactic and rehabilitation materials and aids, procuring assistive technology based on the proposals of the inclusion team, etc.)

The local self-government, i.e. the municipality also plays a great role in the development of inclusion in schools. The processes of decentralization envisage more active involvement of the local self-government in the planning, implementation and the funding of the education for special educational needs students, as well as providing various forms of support.

¹⁶ Инклузија на децата со посебни потреби во редовните училишта училишта во Република Македонија/З. Јачова, Љ.Самарциска-Панова, И.Лешковски, М.Ивановска, Скопје: БРО,2002

1.2. Inclusion team and inclusive practice in vocational secondary schools

1.2.1. Identifying special educational needs students

The inclusive process begins when a special educational needs student is identified at school level. The identification begins on the day of enrolment. All interested parties should be concerned about the identification of such students in order to successfully include the student in the education process. This means that identification should be done in coordination with healthcare and social services when the student starts the education process.

The student with an intellectual development disorder should submit a document from the Mental Health Institute when enrolling in regular secondary education.

A detailed description and a pedagogical profile of the student is created for all students who have intellectual development disorders or learning disabilities (the educational situation is described and later a pedagogical profile¹⁷ of the student is compiled). In the process of identification and evaluation, the achievements and the experience from primary education are always taken into account, while special focus is put on the guidelines that are provided by the parents.

1.2.2. Inclusion team and its tasks

The rules in inclusive education should always be in accordance with the educational regulations and the individual needs in regular schools. In order to help special educational needs students, an inclusion educational team should be established in the secondary vocational schools. **The inclusion educational team** at school level should consist of a pedagogue, a psychologist and a defectologist. One of them should be appointed coordinator for special educational needs, while specialists in certain fields, teachers and parents should be involved when necessary.

The inclusion team at school level should have a leading role in the development of the process of comprehensiveness. To efficiently implement the set tasks, whose final goal is complete inclusion of the student, the school inclusion team should:

- prepare annual programmes and action plans for their work;
- ensure conditions for better implementation of the educational process that would suit the needs of all students;
- take part in the adaptation of the school environment in an adequate manner in order to meet the special educational needs;
- focus its work on identifying the students' special needs, i.e. make a pedagogical profile of the student;

¹⁷ Appendix 6 – Pedagogical Profile Form

- cooperate with the inclusion teams from the primary schools in order to collect data and information about the students enrolling in secondary vocational education;
- publish the prescribed information that refers to the work and the provisions for special educational needs students;
- compile files for the special educational needs students;
- give full support to teachers who work with special educational needs students. This in turn entails:
 - organising training for teachers who work with special educational needs students;
 - assisting teachers in improving the conditions for uninterrupted work with special educational needs students;
 - assisting the development of an individualised education plan and monitoring its effects;
 - participation in solving all problematic situations with the teachers;
 - helping teachers and special educational needs students in carrying out the required practical work in and out of school;
- cooperate with specialized institutions, associations, the local community and the local self-government;
- submit annual reports to parents about the measures undertaken and implemented in the education of special educational needs students.

The inclusion educational team is led by a coordinator who organises and guides the work of the team and is a link with the parents and other external services.

The school principal is responsible for the work of the inclusion educational team. He/she continuously supports the coordinator of the inclusion educational team.

1.3. Parents in the process of inclusion

1.3.1. Parents' role

The inclusion educational team, as the bearer of inclusion, should build partnership with the parents in inclusive schools. Parents, teachers and other experts should actively participate in the development of the optimum potentials of the special needs students. They should offer the opportunity for development by conveying their experience and thus influence the progress of their children during the education process. The partnership that should be established between parents, teachers and specialists could contribute significantly to the progress of the special needs students.

The partnership would be successful and would make progress if it is built on certain principles, such as:

- the rights and obligations of the parents are legally determined, and to fulfill them, parents often need the guidance of specialists.
- the partnership between parents and the inclusion team involves respect, complementary expectations and willingness to learn from each other. Parents know their children best, therefore, when the knowledge of specialists and parents intertwines, the results are more evident and progress is made.
- parents should instigate the cooperation with the inclusion team so that the student can get adequate and timely help. It is necessary to provide all relevant information about the child's development and the type of needs. The inclusion team, by intensively cooperating with the parents should actively plan the treatment of the student and should use language understandable for the parents.
- the parents of special educational needs students need emotional and moral support during the entire treatment.
- parents come from different social and cultural environments, have different knowledge, communication skills and interests and because of this, these differences should be taken into account when communicating with them.

1.3.2. Relationship with parents

Teachers are the first specialist staff to whom parents entrust their children and with whom they discuss all the difficulties in their development; that is why it is necessary for teachers to undertake steps that would reduce the parents' feeling of fear and uncertainty. They should build positive communication and have a proactive approach, informing the parents about their options.

One should keep in mind that two things should be underlined when dealing with parents: 1) "we should always assume that parents know everything about their child and his/her needs" and 2) "parents do not know anything about their child and his/her needs".

The first assumption guarantees respect, whereas the other means that parents should always be given the correct information that will be necessary for them to make the right decisions.¹⁸

1.4. Teachers in the inclusion process

No single change in the educational process can be put into practice without the teacher, because the teacher is and remains to be the key factor in the implementation of the educational process. Teachers are the ones who can understand every change,

¹⁸ Lazor,M.,Markovic,S.,Nikolic,S.,(2008.), Prirucnik za rad sa decomsa smetnjama u razvoju, Novi Sad

accept it, and implement it in practice. One should take into account the fact that teachers continuously accept and develop new methods to improve the atmosphere at school. Thus, they are constantly working towards inclusiveness.

The basic form of the entire process of inclusion is **motivation**, which is most beneficial when it comes from the desire of the individual to improve his/her professional capabilities.

In addition, the support necessary in this very sensitive and complex process is a very important and significant segment. Changes in instruction mean that teachers should take risks even when their professional credibility is at stake. Many teachers are willing to take risks if they are encouraged and assisted by their colleagues.

A very important aspect in the educational process is to carefully monitor the introduction and implementation of the new teaching approach. However, teachers are often too enthusiastic to improve their instruction that they become impatient to achieve their set goals. They leave no room for **evaluation**, i.e. reappraisal and improvement based on previous experience.

The main precondition to develop inclusive education in schools is for teachers to become familiar with the characteristics and the needs of the special educational needs students. It is therefore necessary for teachers to attend training during which they would gain adequate knowledge about inclusive education. This could be done through the information in this handbook and the literature that is to be produced by the VETC; in that way they would be trained to work with special educational needs students who study in secondary vocational schools.

2. WORKING WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Inclusive education should be perceived as a process of inclusion of special educational needs students in regular education. Special educational needs students should be provided with adequate conditions in order to fully develop their potential. This entails early identification and diagnosis of their special needs, undertaking adequate methods and forms of work, and provision of necessary material resources. In order for all set goals to be achieved, the teacher ought to be familiar with the specifics and the characteristics of every disability.

Every child or young person with special educational needs has some specifics, i.e. personal, individual characteristics that make him unique.

This handbook will describe the characteristics of special educational needs persons, with a focus on those who belong to the group of students with disabilities:

- students with intellectual development disorder;
- blind and visually impaired persons;

- deaf and hard of hearing persons;
- persons with physical disability;
- persons with learning disabilities.

The group of special educational needs students also includes persons with autism and autistic spectrum of disorders as well as persons with multiple disorders.

2.1. Persons with intellectual development disorder

The intellectual development disorder is a state of slower or incomplete development of the individual which typically features impairments in the abilities that appear during the developmental phase. They affect the general level of intelligence, i.e. the cognitive, speech, motor and social abilities. Persons with intellectual development disorder have the same physiological, social and emotional needs as all other persons. Their development follows the same pattern as the development of any other human being, but this happens at a slower pace, and depends on the level of impairment.

These persons have a short attention span and poor concentration; they cannot stay focused when performing certain activities, especially when intelligence and thinking is involved.

Their memory is selective and poor, i.e. the person memorizes something very slowly after several repetitions, forgets it quickly, while the things he remembers are presented with difficulty and not always correctly. It is easier for them to remember strong emotional experiences and excitement that is of immediate interest. These persons cannot draw conclusions from previous experience nor can they apply that experience in certain similar situations.

Their thinking process is often concrete and superficial. These persons have difficulties in discovering the cause-and-effect links between objects and occurrences; it is hard for them to analyse, classify, synthesize and their abstract thinking is minimal. They find it difficult to learn mathematical operations and the notion of numbers.

Students with intellectual development disorder find it hard to orient themselves in time and space. They are usually focused on the present as a dimension of time. This makes it difficult for them to learn new educational content from certain subjects, especially history and geography.¹⁹

It is recommended that these students enroll in the 3-year vocational education; in the educational profiles where they could gain competences that involve routine work, such as: baker, pastry-maker, cook, welder, painter and varnisher, gardener and florist, etc.

¹⁹ Ајдински Г, Киткањ З, Ајдински Љ. „Основи на дефектологијата“, Македонска ризница, Куманово 2007

2.1.1. Educational implications

Students with intellectual development disorder have certain difficulties that influence their way of thinking, their memory, perception and attention. These abilities are important for gaining academic knowledge. In order to facilitate the education and training process, it is necessary to use materials that are interesting and that use language that is easily understood. Certain tasks that are more complex and difficult for the students with intellectual development disorder should be presented in numerous steps, while the information should be relayed carefully. The learned things should be repeated more often and there should be an opportunity for feedback. The developed individualised education plan should be focused on developing cognitive, social and communicative skills.

There are certain strategies that could be generally used to facilitate the education process for students with intellectual development disorder.

One such strategy is to present the tasks to be learned in small steps/chunks. Each task should be presented individually and adequately to the student. In this way the student would not be overburdened. After the student completes one task, a new one is set. This is a progressive, step-by-step approach to learning and is typical of many models of learning. The difference is in the number and size of the subsequent steps/chunks.

The second strategy is to change the approach to studying. Lengthy verbal instructions and abstract lessons are inefficient methods for most students. The majority of them are kinesthetic learners, which means that they learn best by doing the task “with the help of their hands”. This is opposite of the ability to perform abstract tasks and that is why this approach is especially useful for students with intellectual development disorder, because they learn best when information is concrete and visible.

According to the third strategy, students with intellectual development disorder learn best in an environment rich with visual aids. This environment includes visual tools, pictures, photos and graphs that are used to explain more easily to the students what is expected of them.

The fourth strategy is to have direct and immediate feedback. Students with intellectual development disorder need immediate feedback. This enables them to make a connection between their behaviour and the teacher’s response. Late feedback makes it more difficult for them to make a connection between cause and effect, therefore, important information could be left out.²⁰

2.2. Blind and visually impaired persons

The difficulties in the development of eyesight are manifested as either reduced or complete absence of sensitivity to stimulation with light, which significantly aggravates visual communication.

²⁰ http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=10365&cn=208

One of the main characteristics of visually impaired persons is their unsteady and difficult movement, which is due to the fact that they are unfamiliar with the environment and feel insecure. These students, like all others, have a need to move freely, which is often made difficult because of their situation. That is why they have stereotypical movements – blindisms, that are manifested by staggering, putting their hands on the eyes, circular head movements, opening and closing doors.

The consequences of visual impairments are different and they are conditioned by numerous factors such as: the degree of visual impairment, the time when the impairment occurred, the reason behind it, etc.

Visually impaired students may have learning disabilities, may find it difficult to adapt to the environment, to learn the educational content, etc.

It is recommended that students with visual impairments enroll in educational profiles that require manual skills, such as: physiotherapy assistants (visually impaired), traffic dispatcher, etc.

2.2.1. Educational implications

When working with visually impaired students, it is very important to ensure safe premises and to inform the student about all the changes that happen in the organisational environment. The premises should have good lighting, the student should sit in the front row in order to better notice (if the student is partially sighted) the writing on the blackboard. Teachers should ensure that these students are able to hear the information that is written on the blackboard.

When necessary, the student should be allowed to record the lessons and the teacher's instructions on a dictaphone.

Schools should be adapted to the needs of these students - edges and certain sections of the school should clearly be marked, hallways and classrooms should be wide, access to an elevator should be provided if the school has two floors, handrails should be installed in the hallways so that students could move independently.

Aside from all of the adaptations of the premises, special attention should be paid to the accessibility of the materials and the content taught. They should be written with a larger font, with greater contrast between the background and the letters of the text (a black and white background is recommended), on a matt paper with good contrast, etc.

Totally blind students should have access to a Braille typewriter. In this way, students will have the feeling that teachers are willing to include them in the learning process. A Braille computer would also be useful.

Standard computers may also be used, although certain adaptations should be made. The use of special programmes (screen readers), could also be an excellent tool for the visually impaired students.

2.3. Deaf and hard of hearing persons

Persons with hearing impairment, depending on the level of impairment, are divided into deaf and hard of hearing.

Hard of hearing persons have some hearing and they could partially or fully develop verbal speech.

Deaf persons have greater hearing loss; they wear hearing aids and cannot fully distinguish verbal speech. They could be practically deaf (they can hear certain speech segments with hearing aids) and totally deaf (they have absolutely no hearing perception).

There are certain differences between these two groups. The hard of hearing persons have a specific speech, in other words they pronounce certain sounds in a wrong way, their voice is low and without intonation. Others often cannot understand them.

Deaf persons learn speech in an artificial manner, which requires great efforts and the use of different senses simultaneously.

It is recommended for the persons with such impairments to choose those educational profiles that do not require verbal communication skills and contact with customers, such as: farming and veterinary medicine, graphic designer, textile and leather industry, chemical and technological industry, mechanical engineering and some profiles in economics and electrical engineering.

2.3.1. Educational implications

The hearing impaired mostly have difficulties in learning speech and acquiring written and spoken language. Students with hearing impairments have poor vocabulary, agrammatical speech (i.e. usage of grammatically incorrect sentences), difficulties in understanding written texts and expressing themselves in writing. All these manifestations lead to difficulties in learning the material.

By understanding the difficulties that the student faces and by implementing specific procedures and methods of instruction, the student can achieve significant results. Therefore, while carrying out different activities in class, teachers should activate the potentials and the abilities of the student.

These students acquire only some parts of the syllabi, with certain variations. They, for example, cannot acquire pronunciation when learning foreign languages, or sing when learning Music (as a subject).

In order for the hearing impaired student to be able to take part in classes:

- the student should sit in the front row or have a central position if students sit in a circle so that he/she is able to read the lips of the others students and the teacher;
- the teacher should speak with certain adaptations in terms of speed, intensity, rhythm and intonation;

- speech should be clear and based on familiar words that the student understands;
- pauses should be made during speech and questions should be formulated clearly;
- unfamiliar words should be explained additionally, especially abstract notions;
- more auditory and visual aids should be provided (pictures, objects, video recordings);
- concepts should be explained with movements, mime and gestures;
- key concepts should be repeated and emphasized at the end of the lesson;
- the student should be encouraged to independently describe occurrences, objects and contents and the teacher should be patient and tolerant of the agrammatical and incorrect pronunciation.²¹

2.4. Persons with physical disabilities

Physical disability consists of three components: physical aspect, psychological consequences and social repercussions. The physical aspect leads to difficulties in motor functioning. The psychological and social repercussions build on the primary motor difficulty and they could be present to a smaller or greater extent, but they still have a significant impact on the overall functioning of the person.

Motor disabilities could be:

- severe motor disabilities, that could affect the person's ability to walk, jump and play. These disabilities are manifested in the following manner:
 - ✓ the motor skills or the muscles of the extremities are affected (individually, in a pair or completely);
 - ✓ spinal deformities.
- minor motor disabilities that could limit the use of the hands and fingers (fine motor skills). Persons can have difficulties with the following:
 - ✓ picking up objects;
 - ✓ holding pens or pencils;
 - ✓ using cutlery;
 - ✓ using zippers, buttons and shoelaces.

These persons could use assistive devices, such as prostheses, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs²² that could facilitate their movement.

A more frequent type of disability is cerebral palsy. It can have several forms:

²¹ Lazor, M., Markovic, S., Nikolic, S. (2008), „*Prirucnik za rad sa decom sa smetnjama u razvoju*“, Lito studio, Novi Sad

²² Стојковска-Алексова, Р. (2010) „Употреба на информатичката технологија во училиштата, за децата со посебни потреби“, Борографика, Скопје, стр.18

- spasmodic – uncontrolled movements
- athetosis – frequent involuntary movements
- ataxia – lack of coordination

Persons with cerebral palsy can have the following symptoms: loss of movement control, limited movements, immobile legs, quadriplegia or paraplegia (paralysis of all four limbs), inability to control the head, speech difficulties, hemiplegia, epilepsy and problems with visual perception.

Depending on the type and level of disability, persons with physical disabilities can be successful in educational profiles that do not require a lot of movement, mostly office work, such as economics and law, traffic, mechanical engineering, chemistry, electrical engineering, textile and leather industry.

2.4.1. Educational implications

Persons with cerebral palsy have various abilities, although most of them belong to a group of people with average intellectual abilities. When it is decided that the student would benefit from attending a regular school, then teachers, parents and therapists working with him/her should create an individualised education plan. Apart from information about the current state of the student and his/her abilities, this plan should contain a list of services and adaptations that the school should provide for the student.²³

In a successful inclusive environment there is positive attitude towards persons with disabilities. Staff support and encourage these students to realise their potential. In order to ensure such staff, it is necessary to:

- understand the needs of the students with cerebral palsy both in terms of their condition and in terms of the impact that condition has on the student's development and learning;
- ensure that the environment and the activities are accessible to students with cerebral palsy;
- staff should know where to ask for additional information and advice;
- take into account the needs of the student with cerebral palsy when changes in the environment are made or when new equipment and furniture is purchased;
- each student should be perceived as an individual, and not as a "sum of needs".²⁴

To be able to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities, schools should make certain adaptations. Accessibility does not only mean putting an access ramp at the school entrance. It also implies accessible and adapted toilets and classrooms, wide hallways and handrails on the walls, an interior elevator if the school is on two floors, accessible

²³ Savic,A. (2002), „ *Rano otkrivanje dijagnostika I tretman poremećaja psihomotornog razvoja*“, Cigoja stampa, Beograd, p.112

²⁴ <http://www.hemihelp.org.uk/files/inclusion.pdf>

furniture inside the classrooms (adapted desks and chairs, a computer adapted to the student's needs, assistive information technology) as well as adapted educational content.

2.5. Persons with learning disabilities

When it comes to learning, a special need represents a disorder of one or more psychological processes involved in comprehending and usage of written language and speech. This disorder can manifest itself as an imperfect ability to hear, think, speak, read, write, perform mathematical operations, organisation skills, organisation and integration of thoughts.

This group also includes persons with brain damage, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and disintegration of speech already learned.

Parents are often worried when their children have difficulties in learning at school. There are many reasons for poor performance at school, but the learning disabilities seem to be common for all students. Persons with learning disabilities can properly develop intellectually, but specific difficulties in studying make parents and teachers worried about their intellectual state. Often these students must make great efforts to follow school instructions, to concentrate and “be good” at home and school. However, sometimes they do not succeed in completing the tasks despite all the effort. On average, one in ten students in a class has learning disabilities. With the exception of brain damage, these difficulties could be inherited.²⁵

When talking about special needs in learning, one should understand that a gap exists between the student's achievements and his/her intelligence.

Learning disabilities can differ from one person to another. Researchers believe that the differences between persons with learning disabilities are caused by the way the central nervous system (further on CNS) functions and the way it processes information. There is no “cure” for learning disabilities because they are there for life. However, there are ways for these students to achieve greater success and bypass these difficulties.²⁶ Some research shows that memory improves as people get older, and students with learning disabilities learn to automatically control these processes.²⁷ Table 1 presents the most frequent types of learning disabilities.

²⁵ American academy of child&adolescent psychiatry, [Online], Available from URL: http://aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_with_learning_disabilities

²⁶ <http://www.napcse.org/exceptionalchildren/learningdisabilities.php#clas2>

²⁷ Bernice,W. (2004), „**Learning about learning disabilities**“,Elsevier, London, p. 52

Table 1: Most frequent types of learning disabilities

Most frequent types of learning disabilities		
Dyslexia	Difficulty reading	Problems with reading, writing, spelling, talking
Dyscalculia	Difficulties with mathematics	Problems with mathematical tasks, organization of time, working with money
Dysgraphia	Difficulty writing	Problems with handwriting, spelling, organising thoughts
Dyspraxia	Fine motor difficulties	Problems with visual-motor coordination, balance, hand skills
Dysphasia/aphasia	Difficulty with language/ speech	Problems understanding oral speech, poor abilities to read with understanding
Difficulties in processing visual data	Difficulties in interpretation of visual data	Problems with reading, mathematics, reading maps, graphs, pictures, symbols
Difficulties in processing auditory data	Difficulties noticing differences between auditory stimulation	Problems with reading, understanding the read text, language ²⁸

2.5.1. Educational implications

Every student, with or without learning disabilities, has a unique style of learning. Some students learn best when they visualize or read, others by hearing; yet, still, others learn best through movement. It is well known that many students with learning disabilities need explicit and intensive explanations of the learning strategies.²⁹ If we want to help these students, first we have to identify his/her primary style of learning. Depending on whether he/she learns in a visual, auditory or kinesthetic manner, the teacher or the specialist team in the school should determine the further stages in the process of achieving maximum results.

The following table presents several different strategies depending on the learning style.

²⁸ Learning disabilities in children, [Online], Available from URL: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/learning_disabilities.htm

²⁹ Study and test taking strategies for children with learning disabilities, [Online], Available from URL: <http://www.greatschools.org/students/academic-skills/627-study-and-test-taking-strategies-for-kids-with-learning-difficulties.gs>

Table 2: Guidelines for learning depending on the learning style

Guidelines for learning depending on the learning style		
Guidelines for students with visual style of learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use books, video materials, computers, visual aids and flash cards. • make detailed, coloured or marked notes. • write bullet points, or lists or create diagrams. • use drawings or illustrations (preferably in colour). 	Guidelines for students with auditory style of learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read notes or materials aloud. • use words together or verbal repetitions for easier memorisation; • studying together with other students. • talk about things surrounding them. • listen to audio content. 	Guidelines for students with kinesthetic style of learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use active learning based on the use of tools, such as role playing or model building. • study in small groups and use frequent breaks during studying • use memory games or flashcards. • study with background music³⁰

The evaluation of the needs of students with learning disabilities is based on the scope of conditions offered by the classroom and the syllabus, and the specific difficulties and strong points exhibited by the students. Therefore, the evaluation should cover three aspects – difficulties, variations and differences, and their connection with the school environment and the syllabus.³¹

2.6. Students with autism

Autism is a developmental disorder that appears in the first three years of life. It affects the normal development of social and communication skills. There are many theories about the causes of autism, but none of them have been precisely determined. Early diagnosis, proper therapy and educational intervention can alleviate the difficulties autistic children face. However, difficulties will always be present to some extent. The autistic person, depending on the level of disability, will always need some form of support.

Persons with autism exhibit significant difficulties in three specific areas of their development:

Communication

Persons with autism have significant difficulties in communication. The type and level of difficulties vary from person to person. Persons with autism find it more difficult

³⁰ http://www.helpguide.org/mental/learning_disabilities_treatment_help_coping.htm

³¹ Gavin, R. (2005), „*Dyslexia and inclusion: Classroom, Approaches for assessment, teaching and learning*“, David Fulton Publishers, London, p.11

to express themselves and understand others, and they especially have difficulties in understanding abstract notions. While some persons with autism can speak quite well, others can have very limited ability for communication, despite the normal intellectual development. Gaining knowledge at school could be obstructed if the type and level of difficulties in communication are not identified on time and if programmes are not adapted to the special needs of the student. Educational programmes should help him/her to understand instructions and learn with greater ease.

Social skills

Persons with autism have significant difficulties building relationships. They have problems understanding the social rules of building relationships and interacting with peers. As a result, they can be indifferent or reject people who are trying to make contact. If they do not receive any help from adults, autistic children remain isolated from people and their environment because other children will give up trying to interact or play with them in school or at the playground.

Flexible behaviour

Autistic people have very rigid behaviour and a very limited scope of interests and activities. They want to follow precise daily routines. They could become very attached to seemingly ordinary objects, such as stones, and insist on carrying them everywhere. One body movement could be repeated all the time, for example, movement with the fingers or some objects could be used in a limited manner (lining up pencils in the same sequence). When these obsessive activities or routines are unexpectedly disrupted or changed, the person gets upset. Educational programmes have to take all of this into account and should strive to reduce the obsession of the student with problematic behaviour and encourage/prompt him/her to be more flexible in those areas where progress could be achieved.

2.6.1. Educational implications

Autistic students do not automatically notice and cannot easily perceive the structure of the world that surrounds them. These students are disoriented in time and space. They learn best in a structured environment where there are very little distracting factors.

However, something that is distracting for one student, such as the ticking of the clock, doesn't necessarily have to be distracting for another. The way various situations and occurrences are manifested is different for every student with autism. It is up to the teachers, therapists and parents to identify the causes that distract the student.

The student with autism:

- tends to remember parts of events instead of accepting the concept of learning that is imposed.

- has the tendency to study mechanically, without clearly understanding the content.
- does not process and generalize information in a natural manner.
- lacks specific social skills for interaction, including indication of his needs,
- understands and implements language concepts literally and concretely.
- is more upset and more incited by subtle states in the environment, such as the ticking of the clock, the buzzing of lights and heaters.
- has tendencies to learn visually. In this way he/she can “see the bigger picture”, its beginning, middle and end.
- has difficulties in the selection of irrelevant stimulation and focusing on important information (coordination between reception and response to stimulation).³²

Because of the heterogeneousness found among the autistic students, there is no single approach or a system of education that would be universally efficient and acceptable. In the process of long term planning of the syllabus, special emphasis should be put on the areas in which the child is expected to be successful. By insisting that they do tasks that are difficult, students can become frustrated and show unacceptable behaviour.

When working with students with autism, one should apply special forms of interactive communication and support, which incorporate:

- a feeling of safety and trust towards the teacher;
- predictability (an established pattern of daily activities);
- simple verbal and visual information;
- active and direct initiation of communication;
- breaking down tasks into short and simple steps/chunks.³³

2.7. Persons with multiple disorders

Persons with multiple disorders have a combination of various difficulties that could involve speech, physical disability, learning disability, intellectual development disorder, visual impairment, hearing impairment, brain damage and others. Along with multiple disorders, they could also have sensory disability, unadjusted behaviour and/or social problems.

Persons with multiple disorders differ in terms of the level of disability. These students can have difficulties in processing auditory information and speech impediments.

³² Крстевска-Дојчиновска, Л. Стојковска, Р. Гулевска, М. Манчев, В. (2008), „Примена на информатичка технологија кај децата со аутизам“, Отворете ги прозорците, Скопје

³³ <http://www.nshc.org.rs/public/publikacije/prirucnikzaradsadecom.pdf>

It is more difficult for them to acquire skills and transfer those skills from one situation to another. Usually there are some medical implications in some of the more serious multiple disorders.

2.7.1. Educational implications

In order to be effective, educational programmes should include various components to meet the needs of the students with multiple disorders. These programmes should include functional goals (goals that would result in increasing the skills of the students and their independence when dealing with routine activities).³⁴

When designing the classroom, the students' needs for pharmacological therapy, special diets or special equipment should be taken into account. Assistive aids and equipment will certainly broaden the scope of functioning of these students. For example, in the past few years, computers have become effective communication devices. Other aids that students can benefit from wheelchairs, typewriters, clamps, modified cup holders and adapted cutlery, communication devices, etc.

Computerized communication equipment and the custom made specialist equipment also play an important role in the adaptation of the work environment for students with serious limitations in movement.

2.8. Recommendations for working with special educational needs students

When working with special educational needs students, special attention should be paid to: communication with the student, the social support, the environment and his/her daily routines, the presentation of content, the assessment and the rules, and the teacher's approach.

In the **communication** with a special educational needs student one needs to:

- be patient;
- be precise and avoid unclear and undefined terms in communication;
- avoid words with double meaning;
- react positively to every attempt of the student (confirmation, encouragement);
- build on the communication with the student;
- to encourage his/her ability to communicate whenever possible.

Social support is very important for the special educational needs students. It should focus on:

³⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/multipleDis.php>

- developing a friendly rapport in every class;
- planning situations of cooperation (assign roles in group work) so that everyone can participate in situations where the student can show what he/she can do;
- practicing specific skills during activities with the peers;
- focusing on the social process, not the result or the product;
- helping the students find a common interest.

The environment and the daily routine should be fully adapted to the special educational needs students. The activities should focus on:

- ensuring a safe and familiar environment;
- ensuring personal space in the classroom;
- reducing everything that could be an obstacle to the senses and unnecessarily distract the student;
- minimizing changes;
- avoiding surprises and carefully preparing the student for transferring from one activity to another, for changes in the schedule or any other change.

The presentation of the content should be adapted to the needs of the special educational needs students. This entails:

- presentation of the content in a more obvious manner: showing, writing, demonstration, using photos, pictures, diagrams, objects from the surroundings, calendars, maps, audio and video materials;
- breaking down of instructions into smaller steps/chunks;
- creating opportunities for repetition and practice;
- studying in real situations.

The correct **evaluation** of the difficulty of the content, as well as the proper **approach** could make it much easier for the student to acquire it. This entails:

- adapting the difficulty of the tasks;
- adapting the form of the questions;
- offering alternative activities;
- consistent expectations;
- practicing the formulation of questions before tests;
- ensuring sufficient time.

The teacher, as the main moving force of the educational process and an important figure in the inclusive group, should be capable of:

- accepting differences and being flexible;
- monitoring the student, not his/her disability or special educational needs;
- believing that the similarities between students are much more important than individual differences;
- ensuring a safe place in the classroom for special educational needs students and creating conditions where all students would see and hear him/her;
- Creating an atmosphere that would not be stressful for the students;
- Offering additional help and support when necessary, however, that support should not be intrusive;
- Finding creative ways to involve all students in the activities.

When creating the individualised education plan, it is necessary for the teacher to consult the other team members, to cooperate and reach an agreement with the student, family and other professionals working with the student.³⁵

3. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ADAPTING THE SYLLABUS AND DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALISED EDUCATION PLANS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS

3.1. Adaptation of the syllabus

One of the principles on which the educational process is based is the respect of the individual differences of the students in terms of the manner of learning and how fast results are achieved. These differences are caused by the different abilities of the students, their emotional experience, different motivation and interests, as well as the specific conditions and the way of life. In order for these differences to be respected, the lessons should be adapted to the individual characteristics, needs and interests of the student.

The basic document on which the educational and training process in one subject is based is the syllabus. In order to ensure that each student reaches certain goals of the syllabus, the teacher needs to adapt the volume of the content, the methods and the forms of instruction in accordance with the abilities, needs and interests of the student.

All this implies that the teacher is willing and able to adapt what and how he/she teaches, by incorporating various learning situations, different interaction, and planning activities to suit the abilities and skills of the students in the class. The possibilities for individualisation of the education process are different and range from spontaneous to well-planned. The adaptation of the syllabus for special educational needs students, depending on the specifics, can be done through:

³⁵ Lazor M., Markovic S., Nikolic S., (2008), „*Prirucnik za rad sa decom sa smetnjama u razvoju*“, Lito studio, Novi Sad

- an individual approach, without special adaptation;
- adaptation of the content;
- adaptation of the content with the use of special didactic materials and aids with the help of experts;
- adaptation of the content with the use of a specific methodological approach, using electronic equipment with the support of a defectologist;
- work with the student on a programme for rehabilitation and programmes for additional classes/assistance that facilitate the development of his/her abilities.

The principles of individualisation of the education process can mean that the syllabus can be expanded, modified, minimized, adapted to the previous knowledge and abilities of the specific student, as a foundation for developing the individualised education plan.³⁶

The planning of individual needs is a feature of special education in the long-term, however this approach has often been fragmented and has not grown into standard practice in all schools yet.

3.1.1. Goals and parameters of the adaptation of the syllabus

Special educational needs students should work according to a syllabus that is adapted to their abilities.

The adaptation of the syllabus is made to:

- increase the student's independence;
- provide better opportunities for inclusion in the community;
- prepare the student for work in the future;
- help him/her transit into adult life.

When adapting the syllabus for each individual, special attention should be paid to the following parameters (ibidem pg. 60):

³⁶ Priručnik za nastavu (2009), pomoc deci sa posebnim potrebama u BiH, UNICEF i DUGA, Sarajevo

SIZE Adapting the number of tasks that the student should complete	EFFECT Adapting the effects that are expected from the student in response to the given instructions	PARTICIPATION Adapting the level to which the student should be actively involved in solving the tasks
DIFFICULTY Adapting the level of necessary skills or the type of problem	SUPPORT Increasing the support given to every student	ALTERNATIVE GOALS Adapting the goals or the expected results that the students can achieve, using the same materials
INPUT Adapting the manner of giving instructions to each student	TIME Adapting the time for completion of a given task	ADDITIONAL PLAN AND PROGRAMME Giving different instructions, materials and tools that would help the student achieve the set goals

3.2. Developing an individualised education plan

The individualised education plan (**IEP**) is the basic instrument and document that regulates and ensures adapted instruction for students who cannot fit in the existing education process for whatever reasons. In a stricter sense, IEP is a written document of the institution that defines and comprises all components necessary for good quality education for a particular special educational needs student. The individualised education plan makes it possible for the student to progress to the level adequate to his/her abilities, includes cooperation of all partners, focuses the educational strategies and ensures recording of data.³⁷

The use of an IEP by a student does not mean that the student is labelled. The IEP should be seen as additional educational support that ensures better and easier learning and faster progress.

The IEP will ensure that parents are familiar with the goals that their child should achieve, the type of support and the manner in which it will be provided by the teacher.

3.2.1. Planning and developing an IEP

3.2.1.1. Preconditions for developing an IEP

To adopt and implement an IEP, which is the main document that allows for adopted instruction, several preconditions should be met:

- an established inclusion team in the school;
- school measures - adopted rulebook on individualised tuition;

³⁷ Мрше. С., Јеротијевић М.(2012), Приручник за планирање и писање индивидуалног образовног плана, Београд.

- procedures for developing IEP based on the syllabus (for some of the subjects, for one subject, for a group of subjects, for all subjects or for after-school activities).

An IEP can be adopted for part of the syllabus or for a specific topic within the syllabus, for a group of syllabi, for all the goals of the syllabus and for after-school activities. The IEP should be a written document and should be part of the rulebook on individualised tuition of the school. The IEP should be adopted by the school's teachers' council, upon the proposal of the inclusion team, in cooperation with the parent/guardian.

The ultimate goal of IEP is to record the achievements of the student with disabilities and difficulties in learning and to train him/her in leading an independent life in the community.

3.2.1.2. Developing a pedagogical profile of the student

The special educational needs student is not able to fully achieve the expected results in the education and training process in accordance with the set standards. That is why a pedagogical profile is made as a basic document which is a signpost in the planning of the approach and the work with a particular student.

The pedagogical profile, as a precise and concise description of the student, is a good basis for further planning of the type of support that the student needs. The identification of the student's strong and weak points in the monitored areas will be useful for the inclusion team in the planning process regarding the resources necessary to achieve progress in the education process.

The pedagogical profile contains the strong points and spheres that the student shows interest in, i.e.:

- what the student knows and is able to do;
- what the student's interests are;
- existing experience;
- easiest ways of learning;
- what the student does not know and cannot do;
- areas that need to be developed.

In order to have a real support plan, it is necessary to observe the student's behaviour both during class and when interacting with other students. One should also observe the relationship with adults, family relations, and leisure activities to be able to identify the students' motivational factors.

The collection of data and the preparation of the documents for the student should aim to create a more objective and complete picture of the student. For this purpose it is necessary to collect data from various sources (students, teachers, experts, parents, findings of a medical person, social services, information from the inclusion team from the primary school, etc.).

After sufficient data collection, one puts together a **Description of the education situation**, thus creating a complete picture of the student.

The description contains all the components of the pedagogical profile, but it also covers and describes concrete situations.

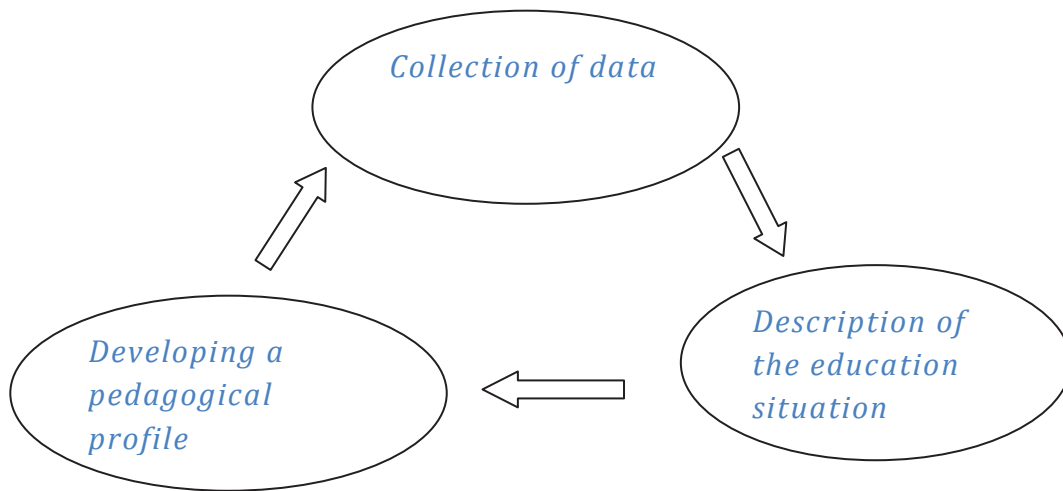


Figure 1. Cycle of the development of a pedagogical profile

To determine the education situation of the student in secondary education, one needs to do a lot of observation. This means that schools cannot only rely on the personal profile (portfolio) that was created by the primary school the student went to. Both the observations and the portfolio will help the schools in the creation of a Description of the education situation

With the observation, which is one of the ways of collecting data to describe the education situation, one can determine the intellectual status, the physical, motor and health status, and the social status.

In order to *determine the intellectual status*, it is necessary to observe the student's reactions in the following situations:

- resourcefulness in time and space;
- analysis of similar subjects;
- analysis of different subjects;
- understanding quantity and size;
- understanding the rules of the game;
- memorizing and reproducing communication;
- level of understanding notions;
- recognition
- level and quality.

In order to determine the *physical, motor and health status* of the student, attention should be paid to the following parameters:

- body constitution;
- manner of walking, running, sitting, lying;
- existing deformities;
- hearing;
- present illnesses and therapies;
- past illnesses and consequences;
- surgeries.

When defining the student's *social status*, it is necessary to take note of:

- family finances;
- family relations;
- number of family members;
- mental and health state of the family members;
- way the student was born;
- past illnesses.

The speech status is determined by a speech therapist based on medical history and testing.

The observation is carried out by the expanded inclusion team in a timeframe of 45 days. After the collection of data for each status, the team produces the educational profile of the student.

The student profile is prepared by the school's inclusion team under the guidance of the coordinator. The team uses a *Pedagogical profile form*.³⁸

The student's pedagogical profile to a large extent dictates the support that the student needs to achieve the education goals.

3.2.1.3. Evaluating necessary support for special educational needs students

In order to develop the plan of activities that contains educational content and key notions, educational achievements, timeframe for certain educational content (short- and long-term goals), the level of acquiring certain educational content, teaching methods, forms and working tools, an evaluation of the level of necessary support should be carried out.

The plan of activities is made for the student who already has a pedagogical profile and a description of the educational situation. These documents will help teachers to identify the syllabus, part of a syllabus or several syllabi for which a plan of activities will

³⁸ Appendix 5 – Pedagogical profile form

be prepared. What follows is the adaptation of the syllabus, while paying special attention to the general goals of the syllabus.

The evaluation of the abilities, knowledge, interests and needs of the student is the basis for determining what the teacher is to do in terms of planning and implementation of the adapted syllabus in all stages, in various school activities, especially in those that are important for achieving the goals of a certain syllabus. All students have different level of knowledge that is evaluated either orally or in writing, individually or in a group. When working with students with disabilities and learning difficulties the goal should be gaining operational and functional knowledge. For this purpose, methods of adaptation and encouragement should be applied as well as using adequate tools (depending on the need and the quantitative and qualitative adaptation of the goals).

For these reasons it is necessary for the teacher to develop an individual long-term and medium-term IEP for each special educational needs student individually.^{39, 40}

3.3. Monitoring and assessment

The use of IEP as a specific document that has a leading role in the development and the progress of special educational needs students raises the question: “How to assess a special educational needs student attending regular education, but who is making progress with an individualised education plan?”

At first sight, the answer to this question is simple: “same as the other students”. However, upon further consideration, there are many dilemmas. Although this issue has been discussed at many panel discussions, teachers in regular education are still not certain how to proceed in the process of grading special educational needs students who attend regular vocational schools.

When the student has learning disabilities and is not able to attend regular classes, an individualised education plan is created, adapted to the student’s capabilities and abilities, in order to ensure progress. If the student is making good progress and reaches a certain level of achievement envisaged with the individualised education plan (yet those achievements are still not the results or are at the bare minimum of the results planned with the regular syllabus for that year), then the question is how to assess the student during the school year and how to assess him/her at the end, i.e. what final mark should the student get at the end of the school year.

Assessment during the school year is a developing process and one of its basic functions is to motivate the student to continue working and to make progress. Respecting the principle of individualisation, and in order to reach the goals of IEP, it is necessary to give high marks because the student has achieved the set goals. This is necessary because

³⁹ Appendix 6 – Long-term IEP

⁴⁰ Appendix 7 – Mid-term IEP

the student has not been asked to do more. If the student is graded with a lower mark because he/she is compared with the other students in the class, then the mark would not be sufficiently clear and precise, and it would certainly not motivate the student. On the other hand, if the student's achievements are assessed only in terms of IEP, then the mark would not provide real information about the general environment. The parents would get an unrealistic picture about the progress of their child, which would cause a series of problems and misunderstandings. Then, in what way should we demonstrate the difference in the quality of achievements of students who have the same mark, when those marks refer to various levels of set goals?

Formative assessment, i.e. assessment during the school year is less problematic because its basic function is to monitor progress and the student's motivation to work and study. The summative assessment, or the final mark, is more geared towards determining the student's status in a situation outside class and the learning process. In addition, that assessment provides evidence of the type and level of preparation and is used for the purpose of selection of the student when enrolling in the next stage of education or for the gained competences.

There are some ideas that the student should be assessed during the school year in accordance with the achievements set with the IEP, while at the end of the school year, in accordance with the goals of the regular syllabus. This is certainly unacceptable and unjust. It is very difficult to explain to a student that he/she cannot get the mark he/she deserves according to the individually adapted plan because he/she did not meet the standards and the criteria prescribed with the general education norms. These problems could be overcome only by descriptive assessment, but this is not envisaged in secondary education.

In the absence of a legislation and education standards, one should insist on beneficial assessment. In order to be beneficial, assessment needs to be planned so that it can be feasible, versatile, accessible and maximally objective. The process of achieving goals should be assessed based on the practical value of the produced information and the application of gained information in everyday practice.

Having in mind this specific problem, beneficial assessment should not be limited to the formal regulations that mandate monitoring and assessment. It should be placed within the school policy and the teacher's desire in which the instruction and the assessment will ensure the student's progress and development.

There is a big dilemma whether and to what extent special educational needs students have the necessary competences for a certain vocation after completing secondary education in regular vocational schools and whether and how these students are accepted on the labour market.

The final exam and proving the learned competences also pose an issue. It is very important to think about the possibility of gaining partial competences for special educational needs students (depending on the abilities and possibilities) that would satisfy the students' expectations. On the other hand, when gaining partial qualifications, one

would get a clearer picture about the acquired competences of special educational needs student after the completion of a certain level and type of education.

All of these issues related with the final exam, the matriculation exam and partial competencies of special educational needs students should be regulated in a special document.

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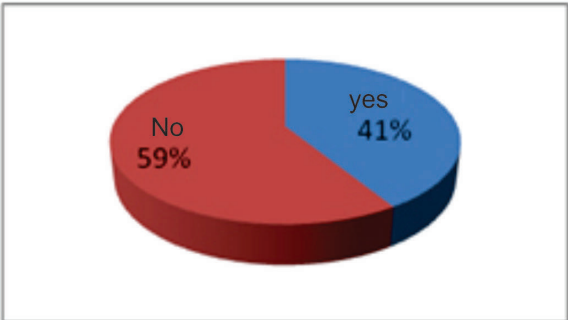
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APPENDICES

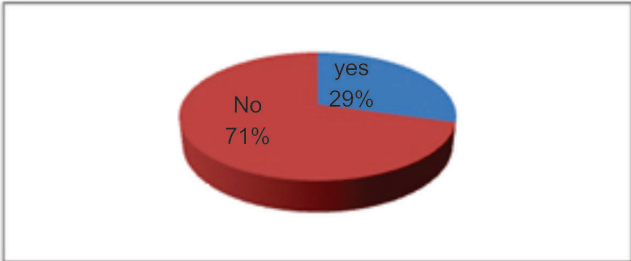
Appendix 1

Results of the analysis of schools' accessibility for special educational needs students

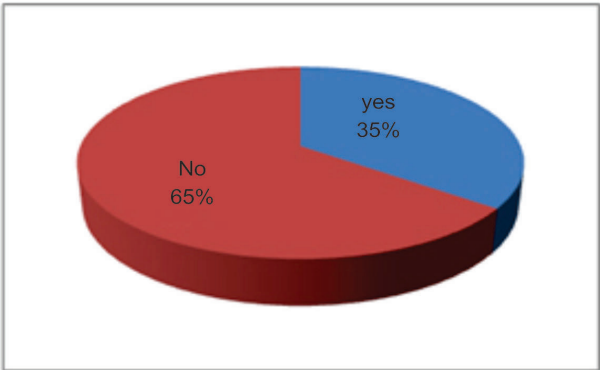
1. Is there an access ramp at the school's entrance?



2. Do you use assistive technology in class?

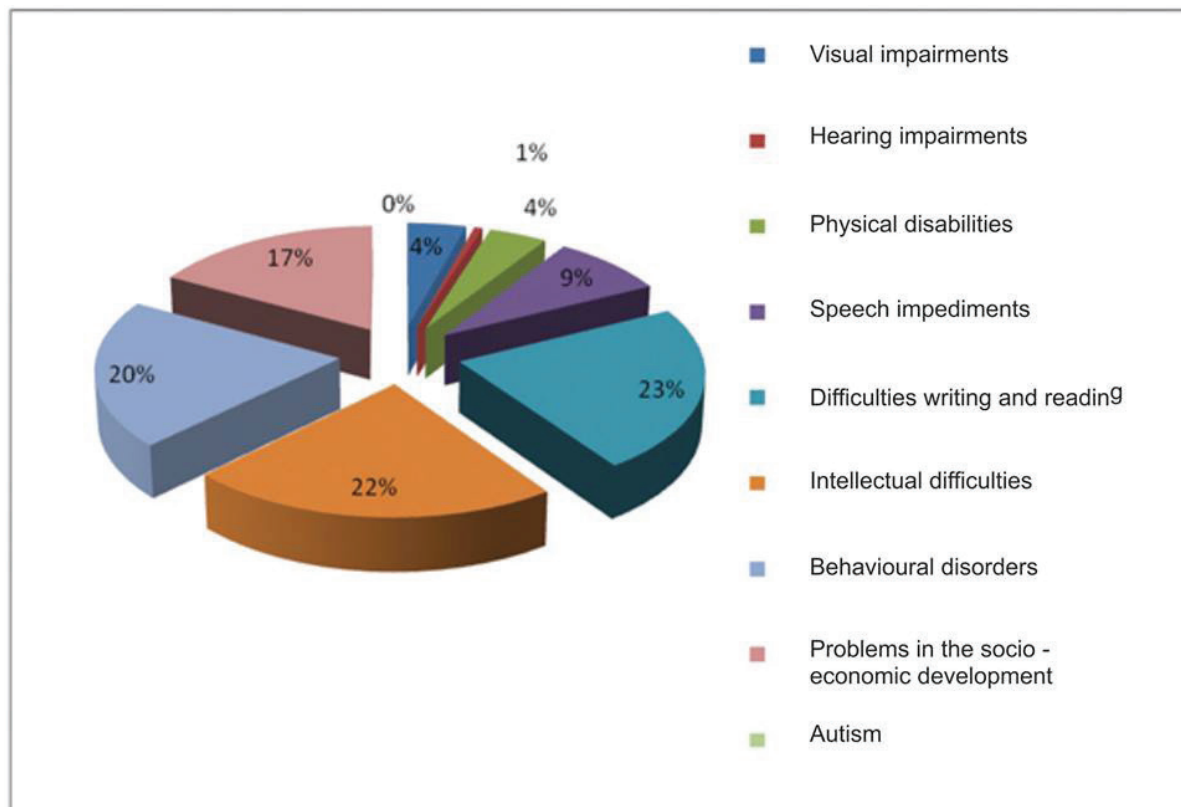


3. Do you have adapted rooms for movement of special educational needs students?



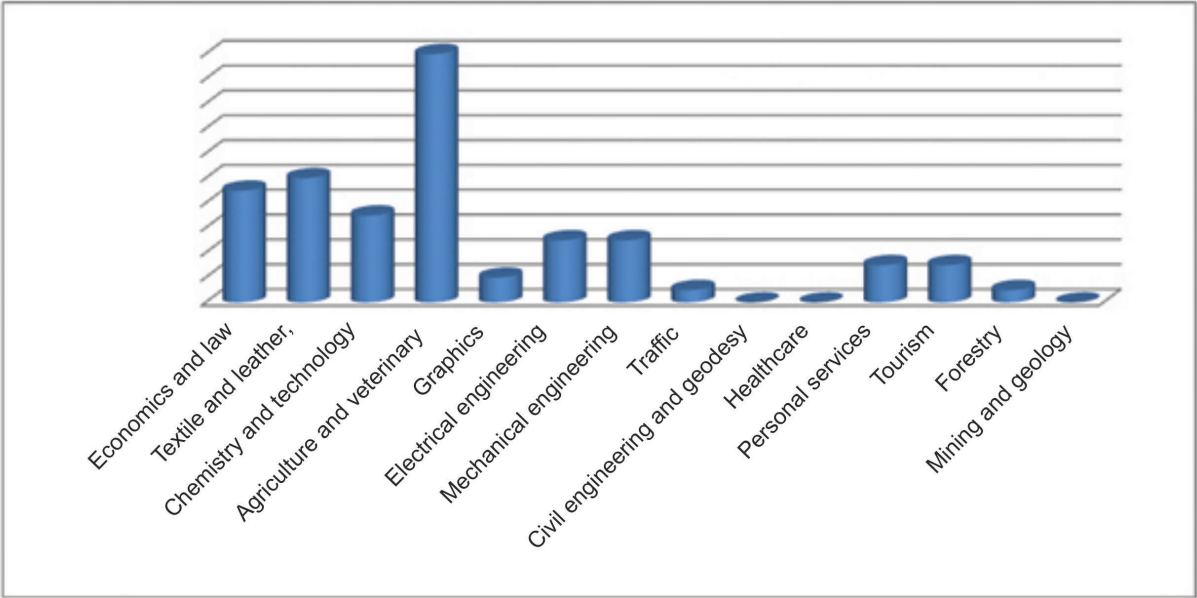
Appendix 2

Representation of special educational needs students according to the type of disability



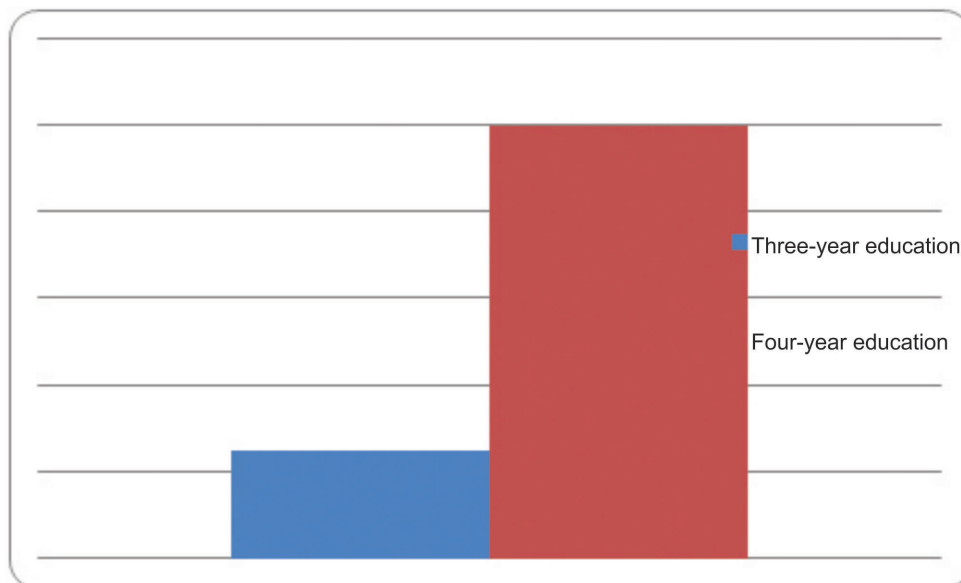
Appendix 3

Representation of special educational needs students by vocation



Appendix 4

Ratio of representation of special educational needs students according to level of education



Appendix 5

Pedagogical Profile Form

Student _____

(name and surname)

Class _____

Areas (abilities, interests, weak and strong points)	Advantages	Needs
1. Cognitive skills		
2. Psychomotor skills		
3. Communication skills		
4. Shows interest		

1. Description of the educational situation

• Description of the student by the specialist team	
1. knows and can do	
2. Does NOT know and CANNOT do	
3. Shows interest in	
4. Easiest ways of learning	
5. Areas that need to be developed	

• Description of the student by the parent

1. Informacion për strukturën dhe funksionimin e familjes	
2. Challenges and aspirations of the student	
3. Learning styles	
4. Diagnostic check-ups	

• Description of the student by the class teacher

1. Level of recognition	
2. Level of understanding	
3. Memorisation and reproduction	

Appendix 6
Long-term IEP

Plan of activities for implementation of the IEP

Student's name and surname _____

Class _____

School _____

Vocation _____

Educational profile _____

Syllabus/school year _____

SMART annual goals		
Goal 1:	Date of test	Notes
Goal 2:	Date of test	Notes
Strategies for working with the student		
-		
-		
Materials/Resources		
-		
-		
Necessary support (specialist staff, defectologist, speech therapist...)		
-		
-		

Support from parents
-
-
Assessment strategies
-
-
Proposals, suggestions and ideas
-
-

Teacher:

Appendix 7
Mid-term IEP

Plan of activities for the implementation of the IEP

Student's name and surname _____

Class _____

School _____

Vocation _____

Educational profile _____

Syllabus/academic year _____

Name of thematic unit and activities necessary	Concrete goals	Outcome/ results	Length of activity (e.g. one class, one week, once a month...)	Application of methods, techniques and forms of work	Adaptation of assessment (oral, written, with drawings, adapted tasks, etc.)
Activity -1					
Activity-2					
Activity-3					
Activity-4					

Teacher

The Handbook on working with special educational need students

comes as a result of the activities geared towards achieving a higher level of inclusion in the secondary vocational schools envisioned in the Action Plan of the Strategy for Development of the vocational education and training 2013-2020. It was compiled as part of a joint project of the Vocational and Educational Training Centre and the British Council, and supported by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The aim of the handbook is to offer schools, expert services, teachers, parents and students information about inclusion in the secondary vocational education in the Republic of Macedonia, and to explain the role of the various concerned parties in its promotion and implementation. It describes both the potential and the obstacles to progress, taking into account the low stability of schools and the experience of teachers in dealing with special educational needs students in real situations. In addition, it also describes the prejudice that exists in society. The handbook offers possible solutions for working with special educational needs students in school.