

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS LESSONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

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Abstract: *The paper proposes to investigate ways of creating an inclusive environment for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) specific to physical education and sports lessons. The study was carried out on the basis of the answers given by students with special needs from the Technical College "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Suceava, received following the application of a questionnaire with the theme: Integration of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The recommendations made by these students were relevant in the process of adapting the inclusive learning environment, effective and applicable in inclusive learning for all students with special needs.*

Key words: *inclusive environment, physical education and sport, Special Educational Needs (SEN).*

1. Introduction

The education of students with special educational needs (SEN) is a problem of worldwide interest and requires different, specialized approaches, according to the individual needs of these students.

Mainstream schools must facilitate an open, accessible educational environment, ensure all resources and all specialized support to ensure every student's opportunities to reach their maximum potential, promote diversity and equal opportunities by removing all barriers that can harm the process of integration.

In Romania, some of the students with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) are integrated into the mainstream education system, while others are educated in special schools [9].

Current policies propose innovative practices on inclusive education that do not stop only at the special psycho-pedagogical side, but also seek to promote new, modern methods that are accessible and applicable in the didactic process, in physical education and sports lessons [1].

The inclusive school environment assumes that all students have access to quality learning regardless of social,

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economic, ethnic or any other situation. To participate in all the activities proposed by the school, both curricular and extracurricular where they are valued, their progress is highlighted according to individual possibilities [10].

By contributing to the creation of a significant value system of society, physical education and sport is one of the effective means that can be used in the process of integrating students with SEN in mainstream school.

“Physical education and adapted sports activities highlight the qualities, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors that enable disabled subjects to participate as members of the society in which they live.” [1]

The means of action of physical education and sports are solutions that satisfy and contribute to the process of school integration. They increase the desire to be part of a group, increase the ability to cooperate, develop attention, develop affective processes, memory, will, support moral and ethical values, sportsmanship [2], [5].

Therefore, the practice of physical exercises has an increased contribution both within the scientific-methodological activities carried out in the lessons of physical education and sports, as well as in the activities of “Sports for all and for all life” [3].

In order to achieve an inclusive school environment, for physical education and sports activities, a series of strategies are proposed to support and facilitate this process [8];

- the training of specific skills for teaching staff to facilitate the effective development of the inclusive teaching process [6];

- providing specialized resources for teaching staff (specialized activities and courses);

- personalization of training by adapting didactic strategies, methods, means (physical exercises, movement games, sports games), didactic content and evaluation according to individual needs and needs [6];

- adaptation of the physical activity environment by changing the material base, the playing field or space, the environment, lighting, flooring, noise, rest areas;

- the use of special equipment, adjusted to support students (tennis racket handle, bicycles, use of special sticks to help with balance);

- use of assistive technology (special robots for hearing, special prostheses for limbs);

- modification of the game regulations and rules (duration of the game, number of participants in the game, reduction of the game space, increase of the rest time;

- open collaboration between teachers-students-parents-specialists in the field (support teacher, school psycho pedagogue, specialist doctors) [4];

- the use of simple language, clear pronunciation, concise explanations to be understood by students;

- the use of charts, templates, the use of non-verbal communication in explanations;

- adaptation of the evaluation tests (execution time, number of motor acts performed, complexity of executions, distance to be covered;

- adapting these variables according to the students' requirements.

In our case, we conducted a study with a number of 60 students with special needs (SEN) from the Technical College

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Suceava, the 2022-2023 school year.

The answers received following the application of a questionnaire were evaluated and constituted essential points in achieving inclusive learning. Also, these students expressed their options in the presence of their parents, the school psychologist or the case teacher, each depending on the need.

2. Objectives

The study aims to promote diversity and find the most effective didactic strategies with which to personally intervene with children with special educational requirements. The individualization of these action tools are selected and used following the answers given by these

children following the application of a questionnaire [11].

3. Material and Methods

In carrying out the study we used:

1. The bibliographic study method carried out by going through some bibliographic sources specific to the topic addressed [7].
2. The observation method consisted in observing the students with Special Educational Needs in order to better identify and understands the behavior of these students, the relationship, the interaction with the other students and the teacher [7].
3. The investigation method consisted of applying a questionnaire in which open questions were used [4], [7].

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1

Characteristics of respondents

Total students with SEN participating in the study	Sex		Class (grade)			
	Female	Male	The 9th	The 10th	The 11th	The 12th
Total number students	Student/percent	Student/percent	Student/percent	Student/percent	Student/percent	Student/percent
60	26/43,33%	34/56,66%	10/16,66%	19/31,66%	19/31,66%	12/20%

Table 1 highlights the total number of students participating in the study, the total number of participating girls and the total number of boys participating in the study and their percentage, but also the number of participating students per class and the percentage of participants per class. In the study, out of a total of 60

students, 26 were girls, 43.33% and 34 were boys, 56.66%. From the 9th grade, a number of 10 students, 16.66%, were subjected to the study, 19 students were from the 10th grade, 31.66%, 19 students from the 11th grade, 31.66% and 12 students, 20% of the 12th grade.

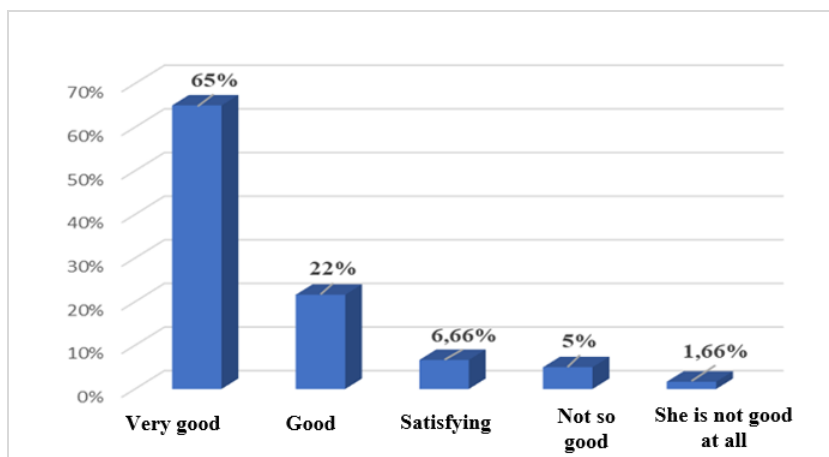
Research items:

Fig. 1. *Comfort state of students during physical education lessons*

According to the data from Figure 1, we can conclude that 65% of the responding students have a very good condition, 22% of the students have a good condition, 6.66% have a satisfactory condition, for

5% of the students the comfort condition is not very good, and a percentage of 1.66% say that their state of comfort is not good at all.

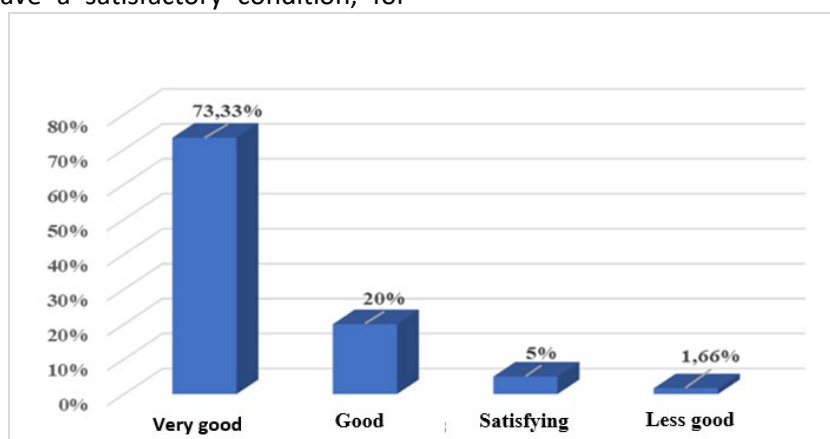


Fig. 2. *The degree of communication between students and the physical education teacher*

The data in Figure 2 highlight the large number of students, namely 73.33%, who have very good communication with the physical education teacher, 20% of respondents claim that they have good

communication with the teacher, while 5% consider that they have a satisfactory communication with the teacher and 1.66% have less good communication with the teacher.

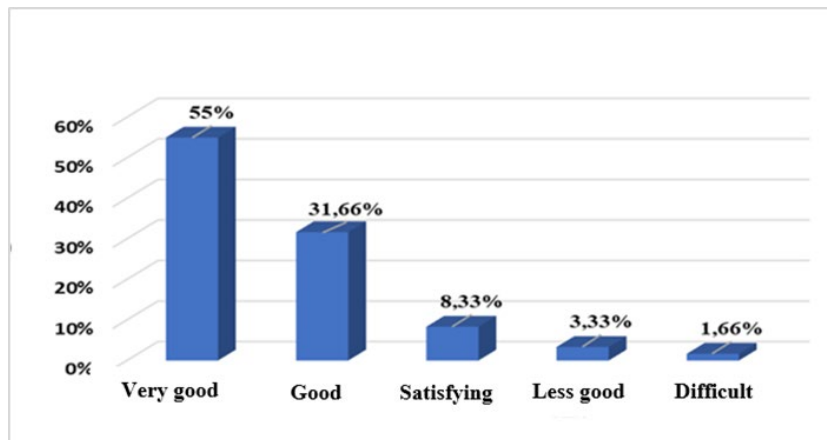


Fig. 3. *The degree of collaboration/interaction between students in physical education lessons*

From Figure 3, of the 60 respondents, 55% answered that the collaborative relationships between them and their colleagues are very good, 31.66% students with special needs believe that their relationships with their colleagues are

good, 8.33% answered that they have satisfactory relationships with other students, 3.33% have less good relationships with colleagues and 1.66% of respondents consider that relationships with other students are difficult.

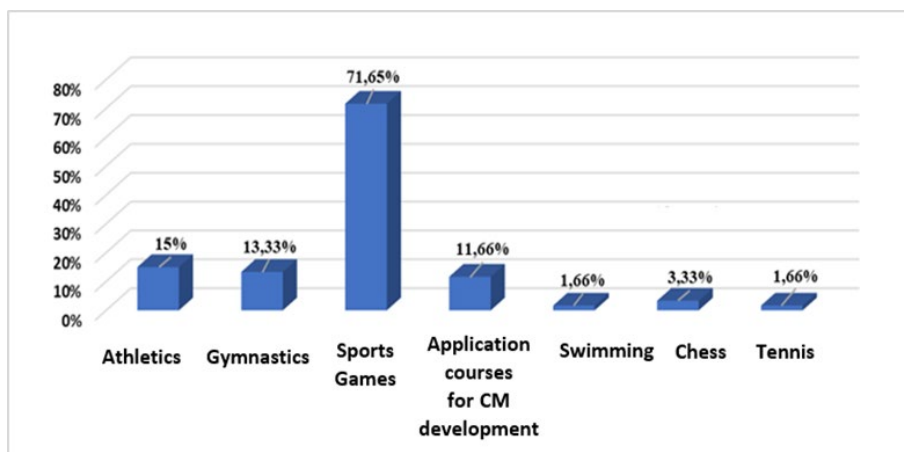


Fig. 4. *Physical activity preferred by students with SEN in physical education lessons*

The diversity of activities proposed by students with Special Educational Requirements can be seen in Figure 4. 71.65% of respondents prefer sports games as their favorite activity, athletics is

preferred by 15% of students, 13.33% want to do gymnastics, 11.66% have as a favorite activity swimming, 3.33% of students prefer chess and 1.66% of respondents want to practice tennis.

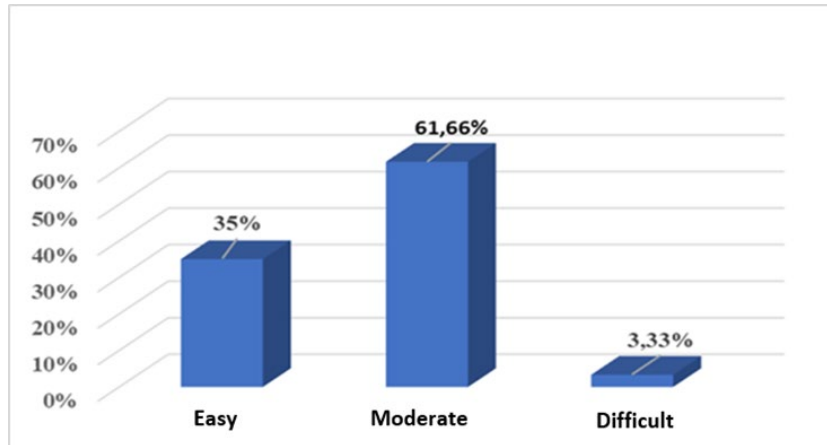


Fig. 5. *The level of physical effort perceived by students in physical education lessons*

Physical activity involves making an effort of a certain intensity. The graphic in figure 5 shows that 61.66% of the students participating in the study believe that the effort made in the physical

education lesson is moderate, the students who consider the effort made is easy is in the percentage of 35%, and 3.33% say that the effort submitted during physical education classes is difficult.

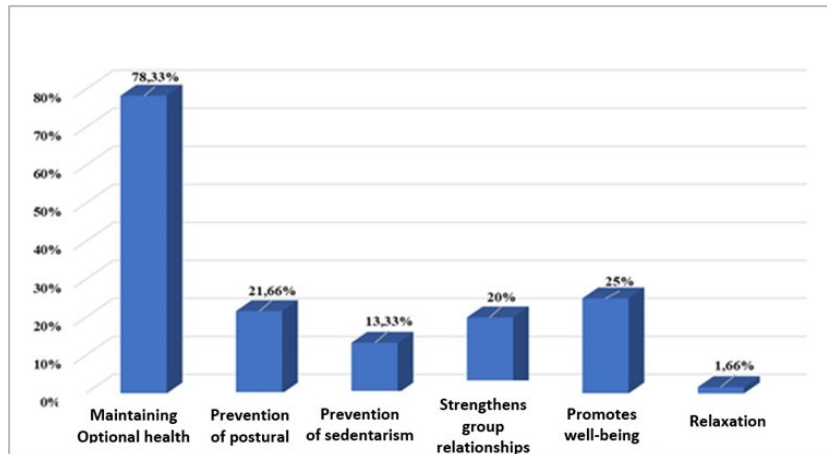


Fig. 6. *The importance of physical education in the school/school program*

The majority of respondents (78.33%) claim that physical education contributes to maintaining optimal health, 25% believe that this discipline favors the establishment of well-being, 21.66% believe that physical education has

preventive effects on posture deficiencies, 13.33% claim that it prevents sedentarism and 1.66% of respondents say that they relax during physical education classes, a situation highlighted in Figure 6.

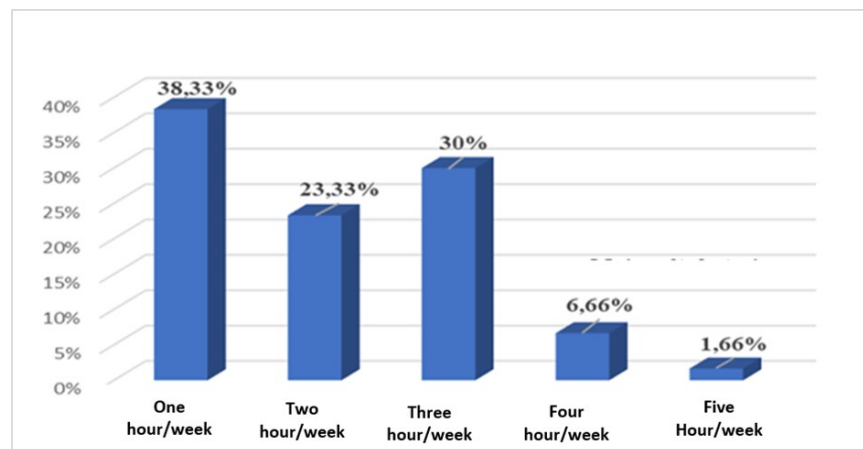


Fig. 7. *Number of hours of education requested by students/week*

Physical education lessons are certain means of integrating students with SEN into mainstream schools. The allocation of several hours in a week is also evident for these students through the graphic in figure 7. Of the total number of respondents, 38.33% believe that one hour of physical education allocated in a

5. Conclusions

1. The creation of an inclusive school environment, specific to physical education and sports classes, which will streamline and favor the physical, emotional and social development of students, including students with Special Educational Needs (SES), requires elaborate, complex work of adaptation in the entire didactic process.

2. The factors involved in this process must show consistency, commitment, be capable of open interactions, collaboration and communication with students, teachers, parents, the local community, be accessible in assimilating new information, useful teaching strategies and efficient with which to carry out their tasks and which help to achieve

week is enough, in proportion to 23.33% of the responding students believe that two hours allocated in a week would be necessary, the proportion of those who they want three hours allocated in a week is 30%, 6.66% want four hours allocated in a week and only 1.66% propose that five hours be allocated in a week.

the proposed objectives, to be flexible and capable of permanent adjustments, in accordance with the individual needs of the students.

3. Following the study carried out, through a survey based on a questionnaire, the answers received, from students with special needs, contributed and became the first options in creating an accessible and personalized inclusive environment. The use of their options in the action plan encouraged them and thus, intensified active and effective participation in physical education and sports lessons, increased their self-esteem, offered them definite opportunities for integration into the groups of students from which belong.

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