

ANALYSIS OF THE BEHAVIOR OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH CES DURING PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSONS

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Abstract: *In Romania from 2021, any child, regardless of health status, has the right to enroll in any school unit in the area where they are located. We make it clear that until now these children attended special schools. The study highlights, through the intentional recording of behavior, the manifestations of students with CES during physical education classes that were the basis for the formulation of action recommendations. The analysis finds its usefulness by informing future physical education teachers about situations for which they were not prepared.*

Key words: *EFS, students with SEN, behavior, recommendations*

1. Introduction

In the literature it has been shown that the physical education lesson provides "a continuity of the process of instruction and knowledge of the environment, of training the pupil to achieve the highest degree of social and professional independence" [7], in which activity is always stimulated by means of group activities. Unlike in other countries, in Romania, the system for evaluating the impact of physical education and sport activities on pupils does not contain evidence and criteria for objectively assessing its effects on children's health [2].

Legislation and doctrine assesses *special needs* as a permanent or temporary fact,

which each individual may encounter in his/her environment at a given time, placing him/her in a situation of inferiority in relation to the operational standards at that time; people with special needs may face multiple difficulties (in terms of reception and communication channels, etc.), the most vulnerable being children with special needs [15].

Research shows that people with autism spectrum disorders have more separative behavioural impairments (than a core impairment), which, if addressed, lead to change of some magnitude; *they need to perform in a special functional environment, which is organised in a familiar setting and provides the same*

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behavioural demands and effects as the normal environment, with the caveat that the demands and consequences need to be more detailed and meaningful using principles of learning theory [12].

Specific to children diagnosed with autism are communication problems, social behaviour disorders and the presence of repetitive, stereotyped behaviour, while self-aggressive and aggressive manifestations are almost constantly present in their behavioural repertoire, causing serious problems for the environment to which they belong; these (including aggression) take a certain form and intensity, varying widely from one patient to another, bearing the hallmark of heterogeneity, so characteristic of this condition. Some specialists consider that certain behavioural disorders originate in childhood and that, from a psychological point of view, children with such disorders are aggressive, impulsive, selfish, show insecurity, low self-esteem, personal devaluation, lack of self-confidence, poor self-control, naivety, misconceptions about the world and people in general [8], it is not by chance that these pupils are among those with the lowest rate of integration in mainstream classes and a particularly important impact on the integration process of these students is the teacher [11].

Stoa, C. is of the opinion that teachers are the most deserving models of communication and supportive relationships, the climate of the inclusive classroom being directly influenced by their attitude towards inclusion; some ways in which the teacher can develop an environment based on communication and cooperation are "encouraging friendly

relationships, stimulating interaction with classmates and involvement in group games and activities" [13].

It has been noted that the benefits of school engagement can be seen in relation to individual well-being, which correlates positively with future job quality [10]; thus, school engagement (or commitment to participate in learning activities) is vital to pupil success and requires cognitive, emotional and behavioural commitment [3], especially since, as specialists Paşăre, D. and Raţă, E., "*the schooling period is considered essential to establish a basis for the motivational, social, moral and intellectual aspects of a child's personality*" [9]. Consequently, the whole education process must be integrated into an open relationship with the pupil, based on empathy and communication, highlighting the favourable aspects of the pupil's personality and taking into account the pupil's inclinations, interests and special educational requirements.

The physical education teacher should identify disruptive behaviours during his/her lessons and, with the help of the teaching assistant in the school, analyse and design measures to mitigate/eliminate behaviours that hinder the child's progress.

At present, the Romanian authorities have released statistics on the number of pupils with SEN in both mainstream and special education, highlighting the essential role of teaching assistants in ensuring that these pupils have access to quality education and the fact that the number of pupils with SEN is increasing. Thus, in Romania, the Minister of Education stated at a conference in July 2022 that "*Teaching assistants are essential for access to quality education*

for all. I would like to tell you that we have more than 100 thousand pupils with special educational needs, in various grades, which are defined in the law, from 1 to 5. There are 77 thousand pupils with special educational needs at the moment in mainstream education. The number is increasing and there are about 26 thousand pupils with special educational needs in special education" [5].

In the current legislative context, when any child can be enrolled in any school, several problems arise both in relation to the effective participation of the pupil with SEN and its effects on other pupils. If in all school subjects' pupils with SEN are accompanied by the teaching assistant who monitors them and intervenes immediately, physical education and sport lessons have objectives directly targeted at pupils. Thus, the teaching assistant can only be a remote observer of the behaviour of pupils with SEN and his/her intervention may be delayed.

2. Method and Methodology

A social indicator of how pupils experience their learning environment and which is conducive to pupils with impairments is physical education teachers' ratings of classroom climate [1]. At the same time, participation-focused research that addresses pupils' diversity is indispensable for broadening the scope of knowledge about the extent to which pupils with disabilities engage in various environmental and individual interactions [6].

In this sense, the present study had the task of monitoring the behaviour of pupils with SEN during the physical education and sport lesson. In order to accomplish

this task, an observation sheet was made in which some categories of specific behaviours resulting from the literature were initially specified but, at the same time, it was based on the idea that students with SEN under the influence of the environment (classmates, specific material base, external stimuli) can have characteristic manifestations only in the physical education lesson.

This study aims to highlight unforeseen situations that may arise in the physical education and sport lesson in a school environment at primary school level and that may have adverse consequences on the integrity of other pupils.

The need for this research lies in the fact that pupils, future physical education teachers, do not study the behaviour of these pupils during their professional training.

The research was carried out at primary school level and three schools in the city of Iași were included in the classes where pupils with evidence of the conditions were enrolled. Thus, 21 pupils with SEN from 11 classes were monitored during one semester.

3. Results and Discussions

Monitoring the behaviour of pupils with SEN will enable the physical education teacher to record their progress following the application of means of action, particularly in the form of adapted movement games, in order to achieve integration and socialisation during lessons, as well as to temper and model their behaviour with a view to the smooth running of lessons. It is also noted that teacher approach strategies *"are used to redirect problem behaviour, making*

activity transitions smooth and increasing student on-task behaviours" [14].

The following categories of events were all recorded as a result of the observation:

- they have a verbally aggressive behaviour towards pupils (they have difficult relationships with classmates);
- they disturb other pupils (they are being rude);
- they have a physically aggressive behaviour towards pupils;
- They get agitated, cannot sit still;
- they have a delayed reaction to demands (poor ability to understand demands and poor coordination of movements);
- attention deficit (they are distracted);
- impaired concentration;
- they lack self-confidence (they cry out of the blue, do not finish what they start and are difficult to understand).

Description of the behaviour of the pupil with SEN during the physical education lesson:

They have a verbally aggressive behaviour - they seek to scold with challenging vocabulary and a raised tone when they feel they are being wronged by other classmates, if they get in front of them, taking their place, when they make a speech mistake and are corrected by other classmates trying to defend themselves;

They disturb other pupils - interrupting the lesson at different times during the lesson, when explaining and demonstrating an exercise they start talking, laughing, imitating and making funny faces at other classmates, answering before the teacher has finished explaining the game/exercise,

not having the patience to wait their turn;

They have a physically aggressive behaviour towards pupils manifested by pushing, shoving, tripping up and shaking hands at line-up and in other parts of the lesson;

They get agitated, cannot sit still in formation to listen to what is being explained, as a result does not know what to do, fidgets, turns away, wants to climb the trellis or talk to a classmate who is in another row, talks excessively;

They have a delayed reaction to demands - slow reaction speed to both audible and verbal signals, hesitates before starting action - as a state of uncertainty about what to do;

Attention deficit - they fail to focus on what they have to do, make mistakes, being distracted by any words heard or noise, sometimes fixated on some material used during the lesson or they simply find something to look at on the window, wringing their hands, losing the sequence of actions in the game or exercise they have to perform, lack of attention to detail;

Impaired concentration - poorly performing the task given, starting the exercise/game correctly but, at the first random mistake (e.g. turning over a cone), deviating from continuing and correctly solving the task given, poor coordination and lack of orientation in the task given;

They lack self-confidence - feelings of inferiority (believes they are not as good as others, cannot perform the exercises as well as others, leading to losing the game), avoidance behaviours, worrying.

Analysis of the behaviour of pupils with SEN according to the moments of the lesson

These reactions took place during the physical education lessons, from the first lessons held in the first semester (until attitude was taken, managing deviant behaviour by applying means of accommodation according to each pupil), starting with the first part - organisation of the group of pupils, when both pupils with SEN, and those without such needs (but with problems of adaptation and social integration) began to disturb the class, some not accepting their place in the formation (single-row and/or double-row assembly formation) next to certain classmates, and others not accepting the fact that they were shorter than other pupils, even crying because of this.

In the second part (preparing the body for physical effort), verbally aggressive behaviour towards classmates began to appear during the execution of the walking and running variants (walking school and running school), pushing, hitting, pinching or tripping up. Depending on the execution of some pupils, there were situations where some were joked and laughed at, putting these pupils in an uncomfortable situation.

In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth parts, in addition to the behaviours listed in the second part, there were situations of agitation and restlessness, delayed reactions and poor ability to understand the demands, some had difficulty coordinating their movements, could not concentrate on the exercises because they were not paying attention to what was being explained and demonstrated, always finding something to talk about,

disturbing the other pupils. For example, primary school pupils, according to the curriculum for 2nd grade and the NEAS for physical education and sport, must have the ability/competence to memorise and perform a physical development complex consisting of free exercises. In order to achieve these derived skills at the end of the lesson, pupils must participate consciously and actively, but if such situations arise (as described above, also related to lack of confidence in their own strength), the skills cannot be performed as required. Towards the end of the lesson, in the seventh and eighth parts, pupils with deviant behaviour still showed slightly agitated behaviour.

All these behaviours created an atmosphere that was difficult for the other pupils to accept, as the lesson was conducted with a strong emphasis on behavioural problems, cutting off the conduct of the lesson in an appropriate way by the teacher's interventions to solve the situations that arose.

Following this thorough analysis, carried out during physical education classes, it emerged that not only pupils with special educational needs have behavioural deviations, constantly disrupt activities during class, often violate established rules (made known to pupils from the first class of the school year, when the pupils are trained in the rules of civilised behaviour and labour protection) for the conduct of lessons in optimal conditions and have difficulties in maintaining and forming bonds with classmates, but also children who do not have disabilities but who have problems adapting to the requirements of school or social integration in a group.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The literature emphasises the importance of good professional training for teachers, because in the current legislative context, they must be able to manage the behavioural problems of pupils that arise during lessons and at the same time be able to carry out their lessons effectively, efficiently and qualitatively; Therefore, the ability of the physical education teacher to observe and monitor the behaviour of pupils with SEN will enable him/her to record their progress following the application of means of action to achieve integration and socialisation during lessons, as well as to shape the behaviour of the pupils in order to ensure that lessons run smoothly.

In order to achieve interpersonal effects in children, the teacher must adopt a certain type of behaviour characterised by the need for social influence, a friendly, honest, interested and courteous style of interpersonal relations and the ability to communicate the expected information. It is clear that, within certain limits, teachers' expectations influence pupils' behaviour and performance, so that pupils become what teachers think they can become, and it is clear that pedagogical optimism is a necessary prerequisite for achieving success. It is reported in the literature that physical education teachers should not isolate pupils with SEN during lessons (by leaving them in the classroom, keeping them at the desk, etc.), as they have difficulty accepting the restlessness around them, so they should not be excluded when lesson tasks become demanding, as they can integrate relatively quickly into the class group to play, if only given the chance. This

recommendation also takes into account the generally accepted fact that as children develop a self-concept and acquire the ability to regulate their behaviour and emotions, they also develop a conscience - "*internal standards of conduct that they use to control their behaviour and that usually create discomfort when violated*" [4].

The social integration of children with SEN can be optimally achieved through physical education classes, as it is known that physical activity in the school environment provides the direct beneficiaries with physical and mental health, self-esteem and a pleasant environment in which to socialise.

Teachers are recommended:

- at the beginning of the instructional and educational process involved in physical education, to carefully study pupils and assess their level of personality development (so that the teacher can design individual routes for each child, taking into account their motor and cognitive development needs);
- to use methods and techniques found in the literature, but aligned with the demands of modern Romanian education;
- to be constantly alert to the latest developments in the field and to possess psycho-pedagogical skills, as well as an attitude of constant learning and professional development.

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