

THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract: Today in the world are applied all kinds of strategies for overcoming the segregation forms of upbringing and education of children and youth with special educational needs. This helps this population not to remain on the margins of the society, and to prevent their alienation and stigmatization. By strengthening of the school capacities with permanent training and supervision support, these processes have been directed toward the development of several dimensions, among which is inclusiveness. The inclusiveness is a sum of procedures, strategies, methods, and ideas, i.e., a movement which is already a well-established practice today. It is one of the subjects in the educational system which contributes to greater socialization, development of personality and creativity especially among children with specific needs in music education. This aesthetic education through music pervades, supports and encourages the development of intellectual, moral, physical and working components of overall upbringing and education. The purpose of this paper is to present part of strategies that are applied in the inclusive classes on the subject of musical education. Most of them refer to the school methodical-didactic principles implying a special program, a special pace and special forms of work which in the optimal extent are individualized. Sharing of these various findings in the field of music can encourage rising of the level of awareness about equal rights for all children, which represents one of the basic ideas in the modern education system.

Keywords: strategies in education, music subject, inclusive classes.

Introduction

Inclusion refers to the possibility of children with special needs to participate completely in all the educational, working, recreation and social activities that comprise the contemporary living. The principle of inclusive education is one of the key international principles and is based on several declarations and statements of UNESCO, UNICEF, and UN (UN, 1948, 1966, 1991, 1994; UNESCO 1991, 1994, 2000, 2001; UNICEF, 2000). Inclusion in the regular primary schools is a part of one huge global movement for human rights which calls for full inclusion of all the people with special needs in all aspects of the livelihood. Although the inclusion is often related to the children with special needs, in terms of the

deficit on the intellectual plan, and hereupon neglecting other development fields, it actually represents the sum of procedures, strategies, methods, ideas, processes, and it can be said that the inclusion is a movement which today has a well-established practice (Pašalić -Kreso, 2003: 6).

Therefore, creating an inclusive culture leads to the creation of the safe and stimulating community that accepts and cooperates, where everyone is respected and which is the foundation for future achievements of all members of the community. It develops common inclusive values, which are transmitted to all new employees, students and parents and members of the school administration in order to develop organizational learning school (Booth, Ainscow, 2000, 2002, 2011).

All this shows that the generally known factors have influenced on the status of this type of education, relevant to any education (social, economic, political, cultural), but also various ideologies from which derive different concepts and models. In that direction, there is a need to raise awareness and to overcome negative attitudes, which represents the key for the provision of inclusive teaching (Miles, 2007). Therefore, achieving of the principle of universal design is guided by the principle of humanity, accessibility and socialization through adapting to the school environment, the flexibility of the program, engagement of expert staff, providing adequate didactic material, implementation of ICT methods and so on.

One of the most important postulates in the inclusive classroom is the quality planning of teaching and to adjust the already existing program to all children. Thereby, the leading role has a teacher, who is expected to demonstrate the universality which implies, in addition to knowledge of the general pedagogical-psychological rules, a necessary knowledge of special education and psychology, methods of the subjects and skills in using the resources and other didactic materials.

The Republic of Macedonia has joined these modern tendencies, especially from 2006 with the introduction of the approach of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the office of UNICEF. Thus, the country joined the countries in the world and led the initiative in Eastern Europe to introduce a holistic approach, oriented towards the child in the reform of education in several schools and the entire education system.

Starting from the numerous benefits of music education, in this text will be represented part of the strategies which are used in the inclusive classes on the subject of music education. Most of them refer to the school methodical-didactic principles implying a special program, a

special pace and special forms of work which in the optimal extent are individualized. Sharing of these various findings in the field of music can encourage rising of the level of awareness about equal rights for all children, which represents one of the basic ideas in the modern education system.

1. Music education in inclusive classes

The subject of music education has an important role in the education of this category of students due to the benefits of music education as part of the educational curriculum which lies in the multi-sensory quality of music. Music education is intended to help children through listening to music, through visual stimulation, motion, and dancing, through stimulation and development of different senses.

In addition to these, for a good quality teaching practice are used general strategies, and therefore we will firstly take a brief overview of part of the scientific findings that investigate this area. Remain cognizant that every student learns differently. The emotional immaturity and lack of communication skills of behaviorally challenged students can mask the reality of their high intelligence. It does not mean they do not understand. Understanding the special learner's own particular style of communication reigns paramount.

1.1. General strategies

The well-known educators Melvin Ainscow, AlanDyson and Tony Booth state that the inclusive education covers seven areas in which is reflected culture and life in the inclusive schools:

- The interaction between the participants of inclusive education, as the cornerstone of interaction and communication paradigm of education.
- Nature of the relationship of family and community, as a reflection of the social partnership of school and social environment.
- Inclusion, diversity and democratic values, which reflect the multifactorial nature of upbringing and education.
- The immediate level of upbringing-educational practice, which is certainly an area of assessment and planning.
- Strategy of teaching, which is a logical continuation of learning environment and professional development,
- (Last two fields) Aimed at the professional role and lifelong continuing training of teachers (Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, 2006).

Susan Winebrenner, in her work on teaching children with disabilities in regular teaching, highlights the importance of implementing strategies and techniques that are appropriate for each child in the classroom to be successful (Winebrenner,1996).

The educational leader in teaching more than 30 years, Kathleen Gould-Lundy indicates the importance of sustainable communities in the classroom in which is valorized the contribution of each student, and stresses the importance of feedback and emphasizes respecting differences among students. The author underlines the importance of engaging the students and increasing their interest in contents that are provided by the curriculum, and emphasizes the role of the teacher as a helper that encourages students to "perceive better and think more deeply." (Gould-Lundy, 2004).

The characteristics of the teacher in the inclusive classroom are: continuity (not stopping of the class because of disciplinary problems), maintenance of the pace and course of the class, focusing the attention on the techniques that will motivate and increase students interest, inducing the responsibility of students, using different methods and strategies by which is individualized and differentiated the approach in accordance with the characteristics of children, cooperation with parents, cooperation of an expert team which determines and evaluates the criteria, methods and purpose of education.

Besides, the teacher, of great importance are the approaches of work which are the same as the approaches of work in regular reaching, with a note that a group work and an interactive teaching is preferable, working in pairs and workshop, and individually customized tasks. When it comes to scheduled activities, students need to be provided with enough time for independent mentor-consultative work with teachers, remedial classes, but also an extended stay.

The didactic-methodological recommendations in relation to the stages of the teaching process and teaching contents are related to the planning and programming process which should be based on an initial assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities of students.

The teacher in all teaching subjects should adapt the amount and complexity of content to intellectual and reading skills of students, and if there are visible difficulties in reading and cognitive processing, an adapted inclusion, and support of the teachers is required (eg., reading at the beginning of the text or at the beginning of a paragraph) and the use of landmarks. The original reality is recommended, whenever possible, and the teaching tools (visual, auditory, text) should be used, so that the students' attention by guided observation focuses on the key contents (Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, 2006).

Features of the inclusive school are: compassion and humanity, individualization of teaching and identifying the needs of the student, the use of as many visual and clear teaching aids as possible in order to stimulate as many senses as possible, good cooperation with the family, motivation for practical implementation of acquired knowledge, adjusting to the didactic materials, work on greater socialization, stimulation of work in groups and teams, respect of the individual pace of work and progress.

1.2. Strategies (methods) in music education

The function of music in inclusive classrooms is important because it is not dependent on verbal interaction and can easily be adjusted to various forms of restrictions in learning. Thanks to the rich treasury and the flexibility of music, even the simplest activity allows participation of all children regardless of their abilities. Therefore, the curriculum should be well planned and organized, in order to encourage motivation and to encourage individual music activity of children in the classroom. And all that requires disclosure of different teaching methods and strategies that contain multiple repetitions and individualized approach to all the teaching subjects, i.e., an individual educational plan.

Generally, strategies in the inclusive music education are based on what has been found for the benefits of learning music, primarily the development of basic and necessary skills, as well as cognitive and motor skills. Music helps exceptional children to learn how to process and react to sensory stimulation. Feeling, visuals, movement and listening music fosters psychomotor skills and sensory perception as well reinforce the achievements of special learners (Graham Farnsworth 2012). Singing might trigger conversation, thoughts, and feelings for a normally inarticulate child, in addition, to help with breathing. Music advances developmental skills for cognitive, affective and psychomotor functions.

For those who are more visual and kinesthetic learners, the teacher could write the rhythm on the board or use large rhythmic display cards, and the student could clap, tap or play the rhythm on a percussive instrument. So far, international experience shows that the attention should be paid to the following aspects: multiple means of presentation materials, especially including technology, such as the Smart Board; consideration to how well the student responds to the music and assessment of how the student demonstrates understanding and knowledge; and how to engage the student in the learning process through determination of interest and motivation (Bowe, 2000 Burgstahler, 2007a, 2007b; McCord & Watts, 2006; Rose & Myer, 2006 and Adamek and Darrow, 2010). By keeping these three steps in mind, students of all abilities succeed (Hairston, 2013).

Since the subject of music requires so much comprehension and participation, the teacher must be experienced, gifted and realize appropriate behavioral interventions to produce successful outcomes class. Creating a positive atmosphere in your classroom is essential. If a special needs student does not feel welcome in the classroom, the student (s) will display acting out behaviors (Farnsworth, 2012).

From what has been found in the practical work for music education in the inclusive classrooms, as effective and adaptable have been shown the following didactic and methodical approaches:

- Find ways to avoid behavior problems; make the student be the 'helper' for you and to be involved in a positive way.
- Use of children's rhythmic instruments such as bells, drums, triangle, castanets, and others that motivate the student,
 - Clapping hands and singing,
 - Accompanying a well-known song with musical instruments or with a dance,
 - An independent selection of musical instrument for performance
 - Conducting the song by the student
 - Active participation in children's music dances
- Find a musical activity the student carries out well and let him develop leadership.
- Have students perform musical tasks separately – read lyrics or clap a rhythm.
- Use brilliantly colored visual aids to denote tempo, rhythm, words, and notes.

Music education in the inclusion also enables all children to participate in the group music activities, which, according to scientific-pedagogical researches encourages pleasantness because of the feeling of belonging, and thus to greater self-confidence, self-control, and adaptation towards others, which in total gives greater motivation for learning and understanding.

Conclusion

General conclusion of what has been found on this topic is that children with special needs in inclusive classrooms have a particularly positive approach to music, which in children incites joy, pleasure, sense of belonging and self-confidence. This creates the impression of the need for even greater presence of music in the curriculum, and not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a challenge for overcoming the limitations through practicing musical contents and activities. In addition, the nature of music allows shifting the

focus of the teaching contents towards children as the center of the teaching process, so that curricula serve only as a framework for planning in order to realize the goals and tasks.

However, successful inclusion in music education implies gradualism in methodical approaches, as well as a greater commitment in function of quality education and independence of these children who in their own way can give their contribution to the society.

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