

ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING AS DETERMINANTS OF CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

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Positive attitudes of teachers towards teaching, are important determinants of their positive attitudes towards the integration of children with learning difficulties into regular elementary schools (Kiš-Glavaš, 2000c). Those attitudes could influence significantly the change of teachers' attitudes towards the integration of children with learning difficulties. This change is encouraged through the implementation of *Program of education of teachers for acceptance of children with special needs*. This hypothesis is verified through Pearson's coefficient of correlation in both an experimental (N=49) and a control group (N=49). The sample were regular elementary school teachers from the Zagreb area who were equalized on the variables: sex, level of education and working place. The correlation of change between the experimental and control groups, in their attitudes towards integration as well as their attitudes towards teaching, was also established. The results confirmed the existence of the correlation in experimental group but they did not confirm it in the control group.

Introduction

Twenty years of experience in integration, in Croatia, has shown that the attitudes of teachers towards students with special needs are not so unfavorable (Igrić, Kiš-Glavaš, 1998; Žic, Igrić, Kiš-Glavaš, 1998; Kiš-Glavaš, 1999; Kiš-Glavaš, 2000a) as indicated in earlier research (Stančić, Mejovšek, 1982; Štević-Vuković, 1986; Levandovski, Radovančić, 1987). Still, there are a lot of subjective, objective and organizational premises that are not fulfilled.

Attitudes of teachers could be influenced through: correct selection of candidates for educational and related studies (Kiš-Glavaš, Igrić, 1998), improvement of their work conditions (Kiš-Glavaš, 1999) as well as additional teacher education (Jordan, Proctor, 1969; Glass, Meckler, 1972; Shotel, Iano, McGettigan, 1972; Harasymiv, Horne, 1976; Larrivee, Cook, 1979; Johnson, Cartwright, 1979; Stephens, Braun 1980; Donaldson, 1980; Stančić, Kovačević, Mejovšek, Novosel,

1981; Wolraich, Siperstein, 1983; Kibler, Rush, Sweeney, 1985; Thompson, 1992; Gemmell-Crosby, Hanzlik, 1994; Gemmell-Crosby, Hanzlik, 1994; Wetsberg, 1996; Utah's Project for Inclusion, 1996; Hudson, Glomb, 1997; Taverner, Hardman, Skidmore, 1997; Igrić, Kiš-Glavaš, 1998b and other).

Furthermore, attitudes of teachers towards the integration of children with special needs in regular schools depend on a lot of other factors such as their attitudes towards teaching (Mejovšek, 1983; Kiš-Glavaš, 2000 b; Kiš-Glavaš 2000c).

Teachers who show more favorable attitudes towards teaching complain less about the negative effects of integration (Kiš-Glavaš, 2000 c). Attitudes towards teaching are defined (Cook, Leeds, Callis, 1951) as the relation between tea-

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