

OPPINIONS OF PRIMERY EDUCATION TEACHERS OF POSSIBILITIES FOR INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEED UPON REGULAR PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHIN PROCESS

PhD Despuina Sivevska

PhD Biljana Popeska

Faculty of Educational sciences, University "Goce Delcev Sthip, R. Macedonia

In order to determine the views of primary school teachers for the opportunities for inclusion of children with SEN through regular teaching classes of physical educational, we realized a research on a sample of 17 primary school teachers from three primary schools in the Republic Macedonia. Obtained results point out on significantly high involvement of children with SEN in regular classes, **greater interest for participation at PE classes compared with other school subjects, participation mostly in moving games in the first part of the teaching process as well as participation in the second phase of PE teaching process as well as better communication with other children.** Obtained results provide guidelines for future action in terms of the proper selection of PE contents, proper organization, good organization of children with SEN in groups, determination of initial abilities of children with SEN, monitoring of children's progress used as a form of additional motivation of children, as well as teacher's positive attitude toward these children, along with the love towards pedagogical profession are crucial for effective inclusion of children with SEN in regular PE classes.

Key words: attitudes of teachers, inclusion, children with special educational need, physical education.

The basic feature of any democratic society towards that strives is equality of people in many aspects of life. Something that is emphasizes and insists in numerous international documents is equality in education. Here is notice the question for education of children with special needs. The population of children in primary schools, 20% to 25% are children with special needs [7]. Their special needs are deployed from mild to severe, from short-term to lifelong.

In children with special educational needs commonly are included children with: disorder in mental development, blind and partially sighted children, children with speech disorders, children with movement disorders, long-term sick children, children with behavioral problems, children with learning problems and gifted children. Children with significant disabilities are unsuccessful in school if their special needs are not taken into account. Their potentials optimal can develop only through the intense form of professional assistance and greater customization in the learning process. It's clear that is necessary to make many changes to get to the productive inclusion of these children in regular educational system. For a long throw centuries the attitude towards children with special needs was segregated. Such persons have always been separated, removed from the environment. Stereotypes and prejudices against persons with special educational needs (SEN) are that that may be an obstacle to the realization of inclusive education. Overcoming them is a key factor in the progress of the inclusive process.

Inclusive education as an integral component of the entire education system provides appropriate education for all, recognizes and respects the diverse needs and abilities, and learning strategies. In the direction of these are and the rights of persons with SEN in terms of education provided in The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13th December 2006 [2]. Beyond other rights prescript in the Convention is the right of persons with disability to education (article 24) which declares the right of persons with disability to receive education through an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning. Any modern society insists to treat diversity as a treasure of mankind, not as something to be discriminated. Because of that is very important researches aimed to analyze the

current situation and identify the possible routes for implementation for ideas of inclusive education. The opinions and experiences of all subject involved in the educational process, is that that it may be first examine in order to plan the education and awareness of the community on the need for offering equal rights to education for children with special educational needs.

Teacher in inclusive education

Teacher profession is one of the most important pillars of the education system. Teachers have a central role in the inclusive process and therefore its necessary support them and to offer them additional training to be able to respond to all requests that inclusive education has placed before them. Teachers have a great and important role in the inclusion of children with special needs in the regular education system. Each child carries with it some potential for growth and learning, and the teacher is the one who can create an environment that will encourage social interaction and provide conditions for their quality education. The quality of the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education largely depends on that how is the teacher understanding for such children, their development and learning process. One of the most important factors which contribute to successful inclusion on the classes of physical and health education are attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion [6]

The negative attitudes and prejudices against children with special needs can be a consequence of the inadequate training of teachers, and all that contributes to the further exclusion of these children. In order to assess the needs of children and methods to encourage children to learn, it is necessary to acquire knowledge and skills. Hence, to provide professional development and continuous monitoring of the modern approaches and strategies in teaching, a when it comes to qualifications for the teaching profession and the quality of their work, must be monitored, measured and reviewed [8]. It is known that at teachers is noted initial unpreparedness to work with children with SEN, and often in different surveys are displayed negative attitudes that teachers have toward inclusion. Teacher's inclusion often seen as a source of difficulty and frustration, predicting negative outcomes of inclusive classes for regular students, and complain about the extra workload and lack of professional help. This commonly arises from the suspicion in their own competence and capability to respond to the specific challenges arising from inclusion, because until their initial education they were not prepared for the work and tasks that now is required of them [4].

Inclusion threw Physical education

For success of children with SEN is crucial adequately his involvement in group activities with peers. Primarily it is necessary to win these pupils and to develop an interest and desire to help these children. The most important help is social acceptance, understanding and respect without pity. Sometimes is enough a child to be accepted in the group and if not doing anything, it will copy their friends and thus will adopt certain habits and knowledge, which it is not possible to adopt if they are placed in special institutions and if they are in isolation [10]. This may best be achieved on the classes of physical and health education. The foundation of this reveals from the process of inclusion "The inclusion is a two – way process: persons with disabilities have become more visible and persons without disabilities have the opportunity to learn and change from the experience of persons with disabilities - and vice versa" [1] The inclusion of children with disabilities in the process of Physical education is also noted as one pf the rights in the The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), The right of persons with disability to Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (Article 30) and beyond other notes it means that children with disabilities have equal access to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system and consequently in Physical Education [1].

Therefore, all persons with disabilities must participate in all activities and according to the dictum “Nothing about us without us” [1].

In relation with this, sport and physical activity in general, represent the factors that positively affect the quality of life, health, mental stability, confidence and motivation, as at those of the typical population and among people with SEN. "The reality is that physical education has the potential to be one of at most supporting and most effective elements in the process of inclusion in the school" [6]. According to the theory of Piaget, the early development of children is determined among other things and by motoric learning. By moving the child comes in contact with the environment. Moving the child defies space and learn. Verbal intelligence is based on **sensomotoric** intelligence. Hence, movement is a prerequisite for any functioning. Considering the importance of moving not just motor skills, but also for the overall development of children, according to the so-called The theory of integral development of Ismail means that motor potentials and acquisition of various motor driving experiences and knowledge is primarily associated with physical, functional, intellectual and social - emotional development in children [3], and in relation with a holistic approach to development, understandable previously mentioned potential of physical education as one of the most effective elements in the process of inclusion in the school. Inclusive physical education exposes children with special needs / disabilities (with SEN) at stimulating environment, where peers may present adequate **role-models** and where great opportunities for acceptance by peers and social inclusion. Participation in physical education contributes to the formation of an active lifestyle, the development of fundamental motor skills, self-esteem and social skills [6]. The benefits for children without SEN is the formation of a positive attitude towards persons who are with SEN, improving their social skills, greater orientation on helping others and higher self-esteem. And teachers can also have benefit from the inclusion of these children in teaching classes of physical education, through the acceptance and recognition of the individual abilities of each pupils, and access to specialist resources that can be of benefit to all pupils, as well as strengthening their professional competencies [6]

Method of work

The subject on this research is teachers in elementary school who have children with special educational needs in their classes and their views on the possibility of inclusion at children with SEN through regular teaching classes of physical education. The aim of the research stems from previously defined subject and refers to determining the views on class teachers about ways, forms and intensity of activities through which children with SEN are included in regular classes of physical education, interest in involvement in the activities on classes of physical education and degree of activities compared with other subjects, and opinion on the effects and changes that are observed as a result on this inclusion.

In the sample were included 17 class teachers from three primary schools that in their classes have pupils with special educational needs. The research was conducted in two cities Stip and Strumica, in three primary school (“Goce Delchev” and “Vanko Prke”, primary schools in Stip and “Video Podgorec” primary school in Strumica) during the month of May / June in the academic year 2013/14.

For the purposes on the survey was used technique a questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed specifically for the needs on this research. The same, besides the basic data (school, grade, work experience, number of children per class, number of children in that grade with SEN) contains 20 questions of which 2 are of open type, 13 questions with a choice of 2 or 3 categories offered 3 questions with the scale of choice. The questions refer to the inclusion (and the extent on involvement) on children with SEN in regular physical education classes, their behavior on the classes of physical education, communication with other pupils, as issues related to the problems

encountered by teachers working with these pupils, suggestions how to overcome them, as well as their views on the justification on the inclusion on these children in regular classes. The questions are designed as open ended questionnaire.

The obtained results were analyzed and presented using frequencies (f), percent (%). Data from the survey were processed using the statistical package SPSS 19. The results for better visibility are shown graphically.

Results and discussion

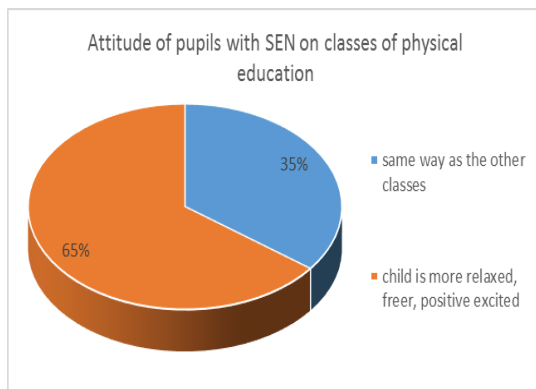
The survey encompassed class teachers who were with largest experience of 21-30 years (35.3%). The average number of pupils in the classes that were included in the research, was 21 (17.6%), and most of the teachers said that in their classes has one child with SEN (64.7%).

Exceptionally high percentage of surveyed teachers who have children with SEN in their classes agree that these pupils are included in regular physical education classes (94.1%). At the same time the teachers asked to determine the degree on their involvement in regular classes of physical education, whether students are included during the entire hour, in a certain part of the class, or depending on the curriculum content. According received almost half of respondents stated that the inclusion on children with SEN teaching depends on which process content (47.1%).

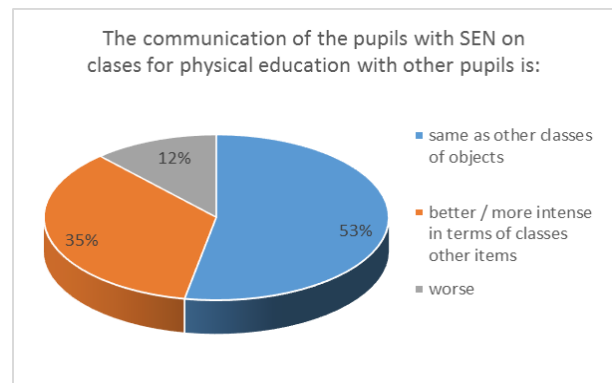
This situation is expected considering that inclusion of children with SEN should be according children's interests and possibilities, or children with SEN should be involved as much as possible in physical activity and certain sport considering their individual abilities and the level of disruption (Ackovič, 1997). Therefore, speaking about the educational work with children with SEN from the aspect of PE teaching process, teachers should try to find out children's interests, preferred activities and PE contents as well as to find out objective manners to determine their real possibilities, particularly the level of adaptation and performance of fundamental movement skills and the level of manifestation and development of basic motor abilities. Regarding to this, the application of motor tests as a manner for objective determination of children possibilities is especially important.

At the question "Does children with SEN want to participate in PE teaching process?" very high percent or 94% of reviewed teachers declare that these children want to participate in PE teaching process. This result emphasize the previously presented opinion that "PE have a great potential to be one of the most maintaining and most effective elements from the process of children's inclusion in regular schools" Rouse, 2009 [6]. These potentials are recognized from both teachers and children with SEN. PE contents (movement games, polygons, group activities), the manners of their realization (in groups together with other children, situation that require but also give an opportunity for mutual communication and helping), conditions where PE process is realized (not in formal situations in classrooms but at the gym or outdoor at places that offers freedom of expression using movements and freedom to express emotions) and possibility to feel free, itself are probably some of the reasons why do children with SEN prefer to participate and include in PE teaching process. All these situations as well as the fact that children is able to do something by its own, strengthens children's self-esteem, confidence in his/hers abilities reveals probably the main reason why do children with SEN wants to participate at PE classes. In order to encourage teacher and children with SEN to include at regular PE classes, the development confidence is determined as one of the several key competences that refers to PE. In these sense it could be noted that attributes such as motivation, confidence, knowledge and understanding are as important as physical competence. Regarded to this children should know that they have a skill and they need to feel that they are able to join in [5] or every child should leave a PE lessons thinking "I can do it" (Rimmer, 2008, noted in [5]).

We asked the determine whether and how children with SEN show interests/will to include in subjects that are part of primary school curriculum. Obtained results point out that these pupils show less interest for involvement in math, mother language and knowledge for environment (35,3%), while the greater interest they show for involvement at PE (47,1%), followed by art education (29.4%), while there is a divided interest for musical education. Answers that we obtained at this question Obtained answers as addition to previous questions point out that subjects that require freedom of expression of emotions, creativity or possibility to express children's personality and interests for sport, art, music are more requires and accepted from the children with SEN, compared with those that require academic knowledge and remembering of information and facts. Related to this, we could give a general note for the foundation of educational system, including the system of inclusive education and suggestion for implementation of more classes for so called creative subjects that reflects children's personality. Upon the questions that refers to children with SEN at PE classes (Graphic 1) most of the teachers answered that at these classes children feel free, relaxes, positive and excited (64,7%) which is additional motivation for teachers to find forms and manners how to include children more intensively in PE classes.



Graphic 1



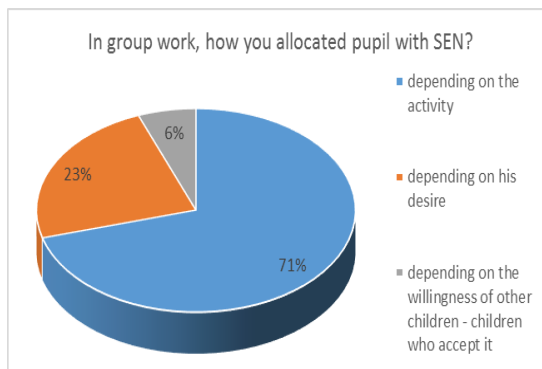
Graphic 2

Beyond the interest for inclusion of children with SEN at PE classes, we were also interested about their communication with other children during PE classes, because as we mentioned before, development of social skills is emphasized as one of the main gains of inclusion from the aspect of PE (Block, 1999) [6]. According obtained results (Graphic 2), communication is equal as at the other subjects (53%), communication is more positive compared with other subjects (35%) and communication is worst compared with other subjects (12%).

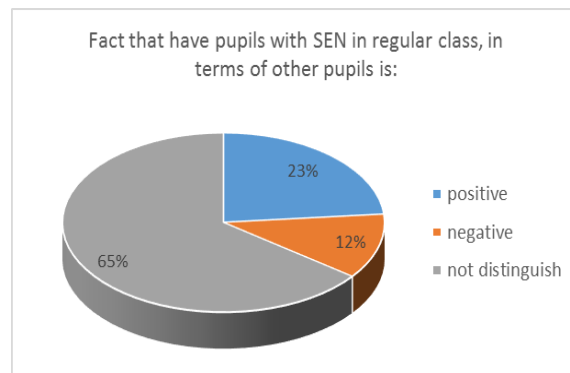
According the didactic articulation, PE classes are organized in 4 parts (introduction part, preparation part, main part and finishing part). Every one of these parts have its own goals, tasks and contents. Variations in applied contents in every part from PE classes, as well as different forms of work applied in every single part were the reason for which we request from the teachers to declare how children with SEN participate in realization in every mention time from the classes. Several categories were offered and for every category there were three choices: yes, no, partly. We obtained following answers: upon the inclusion in the introduction part most of the teacher, precisely 70,6% answered that children includes in these part. For the second part of the class 64,7% of teacher consider that they are including. Regarded to other offered contents, most of reviewed teachers consider that they are partly involved in: games that require individual work (crawling, roiling) (52,9%), in elementary games (52,9%), other games (47,1%), as well as in games with competitive characteristics (58,8%). Obtained answers point out on greater interest for involvement of children with SEN in the games applied in the introduction part and basic exercises applied in

preparation part of the class. Considering the games applied in the introduction part of the class we speak about simple, dynamic movement games that have no strictly defined roles, without elimination for those that made a mistake or it's the weakness one, but in the same time are intensive and always includes all children. These abilities able children with SEN to have a complete participation during the all-time of their realization, to participate according their individual possibilities, not feeling the need to promote themselves, to compete, or to feel inferior. With one word, these games give children with SEN to feel and to be equal with other children. On the other hand, exercises applied in the second part of the class are completely different. They represent competition with self, or the child could perform them with tempo and strain that suits to him/her. These also have a positive impact on the feeling of self-confidence. If we stimulate all these, if we follow children's improvement in a sense of continuous increasing of number of repetitions on certain exercise the benefit will be much bigger.

At the question: When working in groups, how do you organize children with SEN? Most of the teachers answered that organization depends mostly from the type of activity (70,6%) (Graphic 3), 23% consider wishes of children with SEN, while 12% of revived teachers consider wishes of other children. Our suggestions for this part are similar to the obtained answers. These means that teachers should use PE contents and activities in order to achieve certain aims with children with SEN, meanwhile if there is a possibility they should try to answer to children's wishes, but in any case should not be the first criteria for devotion in groups.



Graphic 3



Graphic 4

The several last questions refers to planning of PE teaching process in situations when there is a child with SEN in it. Teacher were asked how do they organize and planning their work with these children in a sense of the curriculum that they use, type of the tasks they give for these children (same as others, different tasks etc.) as well as if they have any need for additional help from special services or PE teachers. Most of revived teachers declare that they create a special program for work with these children, they prepare for them differential tasks/tasks different from those of other children, while part of them same but partly modified tasks (lower level of difficulty) adapted to their possibilities and abilities.

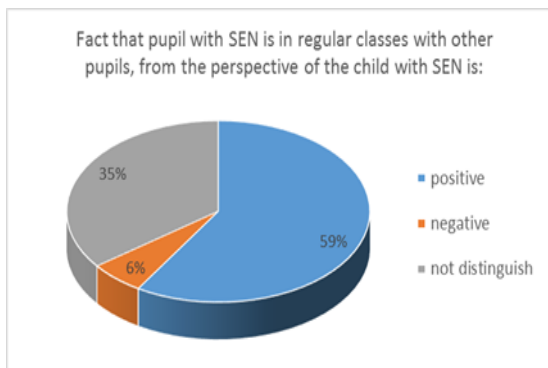
From the aspect of the need for additional help from social services in the process of realization of PE teaching process with children with SEN, most of the revived teachers (76,5%) does not answered at this question, while part of them that have answered the question emphasize that they have a need for planning (17,6%), and partly (17.6%) have a need for additional help for realization of the PE contents at PE classes.

Everyday work with children with SEN is a complex and responsible job regarding both children with SEN and other children who do not have SEN. We also asked them what kind of help they need mostly. From several offered choices they needed to choose one. Most of the reviewed

teacher Most of the interviewed teachers answered that have a need for additional help from competent person (pedagogic, psychologist, PE teacher) as well as that they also have a need for additional education like training courses, workshops and seminars.

Asked about the effects of inclusion of children with SEN in the regular teaching process toward the children that don't have special educational need 65% of reviewed teachers consider that this inclusion does not make any significant difference (Graphic 4), 23% consider this as positive, while 12% from the reviewed teachers have a negative opinion toward this question. Teachers were asked to give explanation for their opinion that refers to the statement that presence of children with SEN does not make any differences. From obtained answers we select following:

- Children and I have completely accepted the situation and it does not make any difference;
- Student with SEN is accepted by the other students and it does not make me any difficulty to prepare special working materials and for him/her according his/hers abilities or to realize an additional classes with him/her.
- Children learn to help and to be treated equally.

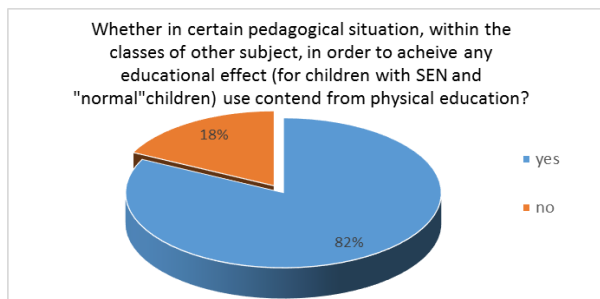


Graphic 5

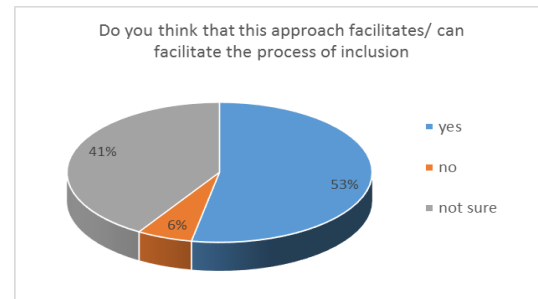
Logically, the following question refers to the effect of inclusion of children with SEN in regular teaching process for the children with SEN (Graphic 5), most of the teachers (59%) have a positive opinion regarding this question, 35 % consider that this inclusion those not make any significant difference, while only 6% from the interviewed teachers consider that this is a bad pedagogic practice which does not have any effect. Indication for positive effects of inclusion of children with SEN in regular PE classes is understanding of inclusion as “persons with disabilities have become more visible and persons without disabilities have the opportunity to learn and change from the experience of persons with disabilities - and vice versa” (Cazzoli, 2011, pg 103) [1].

The last two questions refers to teacher's opinion for intentional use of PE contents for inclusion of children with SEN. At the question “In the work with children with SEN, in order to create a certain positive educational, effect do you use intentionally PE contents?” (Graphic 6), 82% from the teachers answer confirmative, while rest 18% have no such practice. According 53% this practice олеснува the process of inclusion (Graphic 7), while 41% from the interviewed teachers are not sure in the effectiveness of this approach. Obtained results leads to conclusion that we need more specific research that will include experimental and control groups in order to determine and compare the real effect. These type of researches with sample of examiners with SEN is almost impossible to be realized. We need to use individual practice and teachers experiences as well as

feedback information from parents as a measure for efficiency of this approach and probably the most objective indicator – changes that will occur at children with SEN, but also and changes that will occur at children which have not have SEN.



Graphic 6



Graphic 7

Conclusion:

Equality in education is one of the basic requirements at contemporary education and beyond others it emphasize the question of education of children with SEN. Inclusive education as an integral component of educational system able a proper education for all, identify and respect the differences and respect different needs and abilities, as well as different teaching strategies of learning. Teachers have a central role in the process of inclusion. From the aspect of inclusion using contents from different school subjects, PE have an important role in a sense of potential to be one of most supportive and most effective elements in the process of inclusion in the schools. Related to this, sport and physical activity in general, are an important factors that have a positive influence to the quality of life, health, mental stability, motivation, self-confidence, both for people with SEN and people that don't have these kind of needs. Participation in PE have is significant for creation of habits for active way of life, development of fundamental motor skills, self – confidence and social skills at children with SEN, Block, 1999 [6].

With aim to determine the opinions of class teachers about possibilities for inclusion of children with SEN using regular PE teaching process, we conducted a research, realized at a sample of 17 class teachers from three primary schools in Republic of Macedonia. The research was realized in two cities Stip and Strumica, in three primary school. We used a questioner specially designed according the needs of the study. Obtained results point out on very high inclusion of children with SEN in regular teaching process (94,1%), as well as their involvement at PE classes mostly according the contents that should be realized (47,1%). Children with SEN shown greater interest for inclusion in PE classes compared with other subjects. They mostly prefer to include in realization of movement games in the introduction part of PE class and in exercises realised in the preparatory part of the class. During their participation at PE classes children with SEN are happy, relaxed and freer (64,7%), communicate better with other children (63%). For the work with this children, teachers create special programs and differential tasks and consider that additional help from special services in order to improve their practical work. Teachers share the opinion that this type of inclusion have a positive effects from the aspect of both groups – children with SEN and children without SEN.

Obtained results suggest that proper selection of contents at PE classes, proper organization and good selection of groups of children with SEN, determination of their initial possibilities and abilities, following of their improvement as a manner for additional motivation for children, as well as teacher's positive attitude toward these children, together with the love toward teaching profession are the key components for effective inclusion of children with SEN.

References:

1. Cazzoly, S. (2011) Physical education and inclusion of persons with disability according to the United Nations Convention (2006 - 2011). In *Proceeding book of 6th FIEP European Congress "Physical education in the 21th century – pupils competences"*, June 18 – 21, 2011, Porec, Croatia, pg.101 – 108.
2. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
3. Ismail, A, H. (1976) Integralni razvoj: Teorija i eksperimentalni rezultati. *Kineziologija*, 6, (1- 2), 7 -28.
4. Golubović, Š. (2013). Neophodnost profesionalnog osposobljavanja stručnjaka kao jedan od preduslova kvalitetne inkluzije, *Krugovi djetinjstva*, broj 1, Retrieved from: http://www.vaspitacns.edu.rs/obavestenja/spela_golubovic.pdf
5. Hardman, K (2011) Physical education, movement and physical literacy in the 21th century: pupils` competences, attitudes and behaviors. In *Proceeding book of 6th FIEP European Congress "Physical education in the 21th century – pupils competences"*, June 18 – 21, 2011, Porec, Croatia, pg.15 – 26.
6. Đorđić, V., Tubić, T., (2012). Učitelji kao nosioci inkluzivnog fizičkog vaspitanja, *Sportske nauke i zdravlje* 2(1):60-64
7. Kavkler, M., Svetovalni center za otroke, mladostnike in starše v Ljubljani, Gotska 18, Ljubljana, Retrieved from: http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/educ_children_with_spec_needs-slo-bsn-t07.pdf
8. Kovač-Cerović, T. I sar.(2004), Kvalitetno obrazovanje za sve-izazovi reforme obrazovanja u Srbiji, Ministarstvo prosvete I sporta Republike Srbije.
9. Milenović, Ž. (2009b): „Uporedna analiza uloge nastavnika u tradicionalnoj i inkluzivnoj školi“, u: Zbornik radova Učiteljskog fakulteta u Prizrenu, knjiga 3, Učiteljski fakultet u Prizrenu, Leposavić, str. 88-99
10. Halilović, M., Uloga učitelja i nastavnih strategija u inkluzivnoj nastavi, Retrieved from: http://www.udruzenje-defektologa.ba/phocadownload/okrugli_sto/06%20Uloga%20ucitelja%20i%20strategija%20ucenja%20u%20inkluzivnoj%20nastavi.pdf