

THE NECESSITY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER'S COMPETENCES FOR PEDAGOGICAL WORK WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

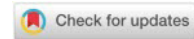
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Abstract: In modern society, the need for competences is becoming increasingly apparent, both for teachers, pedagogues and for other professions. Teacher competencies are a current topic of pedagogy, because they are trying to research, analyze and reach the most complete, high-quality profile of the teacher, in order to maximally improve his role in the upbringing and education of children and young people. It is necessary to design and modify competencies that would be most suitable for the teacher's work with children with special educational needs. In addition to the theoretical part of the paper, in which we analyzed in more detail the meaning of the concept of teacher competence, the paper also contains an empirical part. In fact, only an extract from a more extensive research is given, which explicitly refers to the pedagogical phenomenon - The necessity of professional development of the competence of teachers for working with children with special needs. The research was conducted on a sample of 170 primary school teachers in the area of Kosovska Mitrovica using the descriptive method and the method of pedagogical theory analysis. From the research techniques, we opted for the survey technique, and from the instruments - a questionnaire for teachers. Based on the conducted research, we can state that the obtained results can be used to draw a series of conclusions about the need to implement the competence of teachers for pedagogical work with children with special educational needs.

Keywords: competencies, teacher, implementation, children, special educational needs.

Field: Social sciences

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher competencies represent a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and personal characteristics that enable an individual to act actively and effectively in a certain (specific) situation (Hrvatić, Piršl, (2007) according to: Đurić, 2017: 31). In a similar vein, Leburic and Zec (2008:45) point out that "competencies represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal and intellectual skills, as well as ethical values" (2008:45). Some authors define competence in a narrower and broader sense. Competencies in the narrower sense, according to the author Despotović, represent the ability to perform a certain activity within a given job or profession according to a certain standard, while in a broader sense "competencies represent a composite of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable the performance of a certain activity" (Despotović, 2010:261).

It is evidently an acceptable position that "competence" means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in the work environment and in different life situations. Competencies include more than knowledge and understanding and take into account the ability to demonstrate and apply what has been learned when performing a task (skills), as well as how - with what attitude and way of thinking - the student approaches the task (Radenković & Vujović 2023:128). The author Roc reduces the essence of competence to "the learned ability to adequately perform a task, duty or role" (Ros, 2002:195).

Every child has his own, unique potential that needs to be developed and directed towards a specific goal. Children with disabilities are, like other children, the future of the world. Through upbringing and education, they acquire competences for carrying out work and involvement in all forms of everyday life. The terms: child with special needs and child with developmental disabilities do not mean the same thing, because children with learning disabilities are only one group of children with special needs. This term is not appropriate even from the aspect of psychological understanding of needs, because all people basically have the same needs, but the ways of satisfying them can be difficult and different. If the term

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special needs is used, it is much more practical and acceptable to use the term - special educational needs. In this way, this term would describe all those children who have difficulties in learning, which may be the result of a disability or some other unfavorable circumstances, due to which they need support and help during education. Author Suzić believes that children "feel these criteria with their sixth sense and value them very highly" (Stanković-Đorđević, 2013). The most important thing is to develop competencies to support the development of the student's personality, which especially applies to working with children who have learning disabilities. Consequently, the teacher should know well the individual characteristics of all students, their capabilities, limitations, interests, etc., and organize and prepare lessons in special subjects according to them. Also, the role of the teacher in the organization, i.e. preparation, planning and implementation of lessons is permeated by the constant presence of other teaching areas, i.e. motivational and areas of communication and interaction with students (Vučinić, D. & Antonijević, R. 2020:739).

We are aware that changes in society also result in certain innovations in teaching. In fact, as one of the special novelties, the so-called "home learning" stands out for those students with developmental disabilities who, due to specific difficulties and needs, can in this way create an educational environment by themselves using the advantages and services of educational technologies. Therefore, communication electronic networks provide a wide opportunity for an inclusive education program (Parlić Božović, 2020 pp.65). Accordingly, different competencies should be designed for different teachers, from beginners to experienced teachers; it is necessary to thoroughly investigate and practically confirm which competencies should define which levels (Teodorović, J., Milin, V., & Stanković, D. 2019, pp.625). The transition to a competence-oriented approach in education, training and learning represents a change of the traditional paradigm (passive learning, lecture-demonstration teaching) towards a new paradigm of education and teaching that assumes active learning (Branković, 2021).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical part of the work contains one extract from a more extensive research that explicitly refers to the task: the necessity of implementing the competence of teachers for pedagogical work with children with special educational needs. We must emphasize that due to the scope of the work, not all details about the structure of the population and the research sample are shown. The sample included 170 teachers from two elementary schools in the area of Kosovska Mitrovica: "Sveti Sava" and "Branko Radičević" elementary schools. We questioned the teachers in order to test the hypothesis: the professional development of the competence of teachers for working with children with special needs varies in relation to gender, professional qualification and years of service of teachers.

Indispensable elements of the research are the following variables: teacher's gender (male, female), teacher's educational background (teacher's school, pedagogical academy, teacher's faculty), and teacher's work experience (in three categories: up to 10 years, from 11-25 years and from 26 -50 years).

In this research, we used a descriptive method and a pedagogical theory analysis method. From the research techniques, we opted for the survey technique, and from the instruments, a questionnaire for teachers. The data obtained from the research were processed using tables, percentages and the X2 test to check the significance of differences in teachers' opinions depending on the mentioned variables.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Teachers' opinions on the professional development of teachers' competence for working with children with special needs were divided into three answer categories: agree, partly agree and disagree. The research was based on the hypothesis that all the mentioned variables determine statistically significant differences in the teacher's opinion on the mentioned task.

Table 1. Teachers' opinions on professional development of teachers' competence for working with children with special needs, depending on gender

Pol	I agree		I partly agree		I don't agree		H
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Men	17	34%	28	56%	5	10%	50
Women	69	57,50%	42	35%	9	7,50%	120
Total	86		70		14		170

$X^2 : 7,90; \text{d}\phi 2; 0,05-5,99 \text{ o}, \text{o}1-9,21$

The author of the research results in Table 1. is Sanja Marković.

The results shown in the table were obtained on the basis of the research carried out by the school in 2023/24 year in Kosovska Mitrovica, authored by Sanja Marković. Based on the results shown in table no.1. we note that the calculated X^2 is 7.90 and thus exceeds the threshold value for significance at the 0,05 level with df 2 (5.99). Therefore, our hypothesis was confirmed - in our survey, the opinions of teachers differ depending on gender, that is, a higher percentage of female teachers stated that it is necessary to improve the competence of teachers in working with children with special needs.

Table 2. Teachers' opinions on the professional development of teachers' competence for working with children with special needs, depending on school education

School education	I agree		I partly agree		I don't agree		H
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Teachers' school	51	54,26%	12	27,91%	0	0%	43
Pedagogical Academy	31	72,09%	40	42,55%	3	3,19%	94
Faculty of Teachers	24	72,73%	9	27,27%	0	0%	33
Total	106		61		3		170

$X^2 : 7,24; \text{d}\phi 4; 0,0-9,49; 0,01-13,28$

The author of the research results in Table 2. is Sanja Marković.

Teachers, depending on their professional qualification (teacher school, pedagogic academy, teacher's faculty) opted, in the largest percentage, for the first category of answers - I agree. The calculated X^2 is 7.24, which is lower than the threshold value for significance at the level of 0.05 with df 4 (9.49), so we can conclude that the opinions of teachers with different professional qualifications do not differ statistically significantly, i.e. that their views are similar on issues of improving the competence of teachers in working with children with special needs.

Table 3. Teachers' opinions on the professional development of teachers' competence for working with children with special needs, depending on work experience

Work experience	I agree		I partly agree		I don't agree		H
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
up to 10 years	25	58,14%	14	32,56%	4	9,30%	43
11-25 years	22	66,67%	49	52,13%	6	6,38%	94
26-50 years	39	41,49%	7	21,21%	4	12,12%	33
Total	86		70		14		170

$X^2 : 11,47; \text{d}\phi 4; 0,05-9,49; 0,01-13,28$

The author of the research results in Table 3. is Sanja Marković.

Teachers, depending on their work experience (up to 10 years, from 11-25 and 26-50 years), expressed themselves differently about the necessary professional development of teacher competence. Based on the data in table no. 3 we can see that the highest percentage of 66.67% has the second category of respondents (from 11-25 years of work experience) who agree, that is, they agree about the need to improve the competence of teachers. The calculated X^2 is 11.47 and indicates that it is above the threshold for significance at the 0.05 level with df 4 (9.49), thus confirming our hypothesis about the

statistically significant influence of teachers' work experience on their opinion about the need to improve competence teacher.

4. DISCUSSIONS

It is unnecessary to talk about how important the teacher's competence is in the successful realization of the educational process of students with special educational needs. It is certainly important that teachers possess competencies that the authors classify in three categories: key, basic and special competencies, but emotional competence is also indispensable. In fact, the teacher must possess those human, humane qualities, tolerance, philanthropy, willingness to give every child the maximum in education.

According to the obtained research results, we can conclude about the necessity of improving the competence of teachers in working with children with special needs. The mitigating circumstance is that the teachers are ready for cooperation, for innovations in working with children with special needs, as well as for cooperation with the pedagogical assistant in order to achieve better results. Of course, this question opens up other topics and needs, but we are aware that teaching must be innovated and include pedagogical assistants, as well as personal companions for children with special needs, in order to achieve effective educational work.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Teachers have a dominant role in educational work. It is necessary for them to improve themselves permanently. Our hypothesis, which is as follows: The necessity of professional improvement of the competence of teachers for working with children with special needs is confirmed in this work. Therefore, teachers must improve professionally and work on expanding the spectrum competencies that are necessary in the implementation of educational work with children.

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