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The effectiveness of using technology on learning English of
students with disabilities. A case study in some primary
schools in Kosovo

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Declaration of Authorship

I hereby certify that this thesis has been composed by me and is based on my own work, unless stated otherwise. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this thesis. All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information, including graphs and data sets, have been specifically acknowledged.

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Abstract

Teachers' main responsibility is to help their students improve their skills. Teachers experience various students during their teaching career and you can never know if you will or will not have a student with special needs in your classroom. Students with special needs experience difficulties almost in all aspects of their lives especially in the process of education. So, they need special methods to be applied towards them, to include them in classroom activities. Maybe these students need something different to make their learning easier and more interesting to better express themselves. Every country tries to improve its educational system by using modern methods and strategies. Technology allows students a different way to participate or express themselves. But, I was curious if the same happens with special needs students. This is the main reason why I decided to make a research on this topic.

The purpose of this diploma thesis is to explore and find out if the use of technology tools (laptops and tablets) and multimedia motivate, engage and help students with disabilities show what they know in the way that works best for them. This paper aims to find out if the progress of students with special needs is evident, if their experience difficulties in their learning process and if teachers reach their learning objectives while working with these students, by using modern strategies. To identify the scope of this study, quantitative and qualitative research methods were utilized. The first measuring instrument was designed in the form of a questionnaire that was conducted with twenty two teachers of six primary schools in Gjilan and Prizren. The survey was constructed in eighteen questions and was translated into the Albanian language too for teachers who find easier to answer in their native language. Another instrument was an interview with twenty parents who have children with disabilities attending these six primary schools in Gjilan and Prizren. I prepared eleven questions for them, regarding the difficulties they as parents face with their children, the progress of their children at school and their collaboration with teachers of their children. And the last instrument used in this research was an observation form with students with disabilities in these schools. I observed these students for four weeks, twice a week, to understand the effectiveness of using technology while teaching English to them. Also, I wanted to understand the difference between learning English through traditional way comparing to learning it through the application of technology.

The results and data will be analyzed and discussed further. The significance of this research paper is absolutely worthy since it represents a defined problem in the educational system. Findings of this study are expected to contribute on the improvement of the way on how English teachers in Kosovo teach English to the students with special needs. Having an understanding of the appropriate use of methods and strategies with students with special needs, by allowing teachers to experiment with different ways to present information, can facilitate the process of teaching and learning for the English teachers of Kosovo who work with these children.

Abstrakti

Përgjegjësia kryesore e mësuesve është të ndihmojnë studentët e tyre të përmirësojnë aftësitë e tyre. Mësimdhënësit punojnë me studentë të ndryshëm gjatë karrierës së tyre mësimore dhe nuk mund të dinë nëse do të kenë ose jo nxënës me nevoja të veçanta në klasën e tyre. Studentët me nevoja të veçanta përjetojnë vështirësi pothuajse në të gjitha aspektet e jetës së tyre, veçanërisht në procesin e edukimit. Prandaj, ata kanë nevojë për metoda të veçanta që do të zbatohen ndaj tyre, sa i përket procesit mësimor. Ndoshta nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta kanë nevojë për diçka më ndryshe në mënyrë që të ju lehtësohet procesi i të nxënës. Secili shtet mundohet ta përmirësojë sistemin e edukimit duke përdorur metoda dhe strategji të ndryshme. Aplikimi i teknologjisë u lejon nxënësve një rrugë më të përshtatshme për tu shprehur. Por, unë isha kurioze nëse e njëjta gjë ndodhë edhe me nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta. Kjo është arsyeja kryesore pse vendosa të bëj një hulumtim mbi këtë temë.

Qëllimi i kësaj teme të diplomës është të hulumtojë dhe të zbulojë nëse përdorimi i mjeteve teknologjike (laptopëve dhe tabletëve) dhe multimedias i motivon, angazhon dhe i ndihmon nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta të shprehen më mirë. Ky hulumtim synon të zbulojë nëse progresi i nxënësve me nevoja të veçanta është i dukshëm, nëse këta nxënës hasin vështirësi në procesin e nxënies dhe nëse mësuesit arrijnë objektivat e tyre të të nxënës gjatë punës me këta studentë. Për të identifikuar qëllimin e këtij studimi, u përdoren metodat sasiore kërkimore dhe cilësore. Instrumenti i parë i matjes u dizajnuar në formën e një pyetësori që u bë me njëzet e dy mësimdhënëse të gjashtë shkollave fillore në Gjiçan dhe Prizren. Pyetësori përmbante tetëmbëdhjetë pyetje dhe ishte përkthyer edhe në gjuhën shqipe poashtu, për mësimdhënësit të cilët e kanë më të lehtë të shprehen në gjuhën shqipe. Një tjetër instrument ishte një intervistë me njëzet prindër të cilët kishin fëmijë me nevoja të veçanta në këto shkolla. Unë i përgatita njëmbëdhjetë pyetje për ta, rreth vështirësive që ata si prindër hasin, për progresin e fëmijëve të tyre në shkollë si dhe bashkëpunimit të tyre me mësimdhënësit e fëmijëve të tyre. Ndërsa instrumenti i fundit i përdorur për këtë hulumtim ishte një mbikëqyrje apo vrojtim i nxënësve me nevoja të veçanta në këto shkolla. Unë i vëzhgova ata për katër javë me rradhë, nga dy here në javë, për të kuptuar efektshmërinë e përdorimit të teknologjisë dhe dallimin në mes të mësuarit në klasë ku përdoret teknologjia dhe në klasë tradicionale.

Rezultatet dhe të dhënat do të analizohen dhe diskutohen më tutje. Domethënia e këtij materiali hulumtues është absolutisht e denjë pasi që paraqet një problem të përcaktuar në

sistemin arsimorë. Gjetjet e këtij studimi pritet të kontribuojnë në përmirësimin e metodave dhe mënyrës së mësimdhënies të mësimit të gjuhës angleze që punojnë me nxënësit me aftësi të kufizuara. Të kuptuarit e përdorimit të duhur të metodave adekuate me nxënësit me nevojë të veçanta, mund të lehtësojë procesin e mësimdhënies për mësuesit e gjuhës angleze në Kosovë që punojnë me këta fëmijë.

Working title of the thesis:

"The effectiveness of using technology on learning English of students with disabilities. A case study in some primary schools in Kosovo"

Albanian:

Efektshmëria e përdorimit të teknologjisë në të mësuarit e gjuhës angleze nga nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta. Rast studimi janë disa shkolla fillore në Kosovë.

Macedonian:

Ефективноста на користењето технологија врз изучувањето на англискиот кај студентите со потешкотии – случај од основните училишта во Косово

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Chapter I: Introduction

Every student is valuable for the system of education, including all kind of students. Special education remains a great problem for teachers especially in Kosovo, where students with disabilities attend the same schools as other students. Sometimes it is difficult for the teachers to distinguish students who fail because of learning disabilities, from students who fail for other reasons. Educators are usually faced with many challenges. Teachers face difficulties because to focus in the world of each student and having into consideration their specific personality that must be respected all time; it is hardworking and needs attention. This becomes even harder when it comes to the learning of another language which is a second language for these students. Teaching a second language, English in that case, especially with students with special needs, requires techniques and methods which make teaching and learning comprehensible for these students. The role of technology and its development in society is evident and its integration in the process of education is made a necessity, especially in language classes. Through technology tools and multimedia, teachers try to make their teaching more creative and interactive for their students. Laptops and tablets connected with the internet are mostly used on English language teaching classes nowadays. Educators and researchers consider technology as a very helpful tool which facilitates students' understanding and acquiring of a new language. "Technology can help "facilitate the attainment of learning goals for individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, move, read, write, understand English, sustain attention, organize, engage and remember". (Favazza & Dalton, 2012, p. 134).

Based on my teaching experience, students of all abilities and backgrounds want to be in a classroom that includes them all and conveys respect, but students with disabilities have more difficulties and challenges in the classroom setting and they need accommodation and consideration. It is teachers' responsibility to help students be inclusive in the classroom and help them improve their skills. Students with special needs require a special treatment, special methods and special methodology while teaching them. Every student is unique and every student needs support.

This study aims to explore if the use of the technology helps students with disabilities learn English better, how do the teachers use the technology to facilitate their students' learning and what other methods teachers use in teaching English to the students with special needs. It

attempts to show if teachers try to go through the same process with all students without letting these students feel uncomfortable. It also attempts to find out if the use of the technology is effective and facilitates the learning process regarding students with special needs comparing to the traditional methods which are usually used in primary schools and find out the difficulties that teachers face while working with these students.

Importance of the thesis

The duty of every teacher is to know what kind of tasks and methods to use during classes, where some of them can be extremely helpful and motivational. To explore and find out if the use of technology tools (laptops and tablets) can help students with disabilities learn English better, show what they know in the way that works best for them and find out the methods teachers use in teaching English to the students with special needs, will be the aim of this research. I will try to identify qualities and to determine what teachers should use in order to be professional on their field, and to use only methods that get easily accepted by students. This is important for understanding what is required from a good English teacher in order to be more successful with teaching process according to students' needs. The significance of this research paper is absolutely worthy since it represents a defined problem in the educational system. Having an understanding of the appropriate use of methods with students with special needs, can facilitate both process of teaching and learning for the English teachers of Kosovo who work with these children. This helps them to be more active and cooperate with each-other as beneficial and effective tool for them.

Structure of the thesis

This diploma thesis contains five chapters divided into the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion and conclusion.

The first chapter which is introduction has an overview about the effectiveness of using technology on learning English of students with disabilities, the importance of this thesis, followed by general, specific objectives and the hypotheses of the thesis.

The second chapter is literature review which relates to the language learning, special education, inclusive schooling, problems faced by people with disabilities, their families and their teachers and the use of technology tools to facilitate learning process.

The third chapter discusses the methodology and study procedures. It introduces the participants, procedure, instruments, research questions, data collection and main study of the research.

The fourth chapter describes all the result from the teachers' questionnaires, parents' interviews and observation with students with disabilities, followed by a discussion related to the findings.

The last chapter deals with a general conclusion of the results and recommendations followed at the end by the bibliography with all the sources used during this research and the appendixes.

Aims of the research

General objective

The aim of this study is to show if contemporary methods are used with students with special needs to learn English better and if the use of technology with these students is beneficial and effective for students' acquiring of language. So, this paper is going to find out whether the application of the contemporary methods specifically the use of technology through English classes helps special needs students 'progress and is more effective and beneficial comparing to traditional methods.

Specific objectives

- To find out if English teachers follow a pre-arranged plan with their special needs students
- To find out if the use of technology tools are beneficial and effective for learning and teaching
- To find out if teachers use the same methods with all their students.
- To find out if students with special needs managed to learn English so far, using traditional methods.
- To find out the barriers or challenges that these English teachers experience in their daily with their special needs students and how do they attempt to overcome them.

Hypotheses

- 1 The use of technology to teach English to the students with special needs is effective and beneficial for them.
- 2 Contemporary methods keep special needs students engaged, interested and motivated.
- 3 Working with students with special needs is very challenging.
- 4 Students with special needs experience difficulties in their process of learning
- 5 The role of the teacher in the classroom is very important for students with special needs and technology allows teachers to easily differentiate

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review presents facts of many researchers who have investigated regarding students with special needs and the effectiveness of using technology as a supportive tool on learning English, especially from students with disabilities.

Technology development has had a great influence in the entire system of education, including English Language classes too. Many scientists, researchers and educators, have proven that technology as a tool helps students to learn faster and easier. “Technology can be a highly engaging and interactive tool, providing a source of real language, both written and spoken, in the classroom, and motivating learners to produce more language than they otherwise might have done”. (Stanley, 2013, p. 2)

Teachers experience various students during their teaching career and you can never know if you will or will not have a student with special needs in your classroom. In all of these cases, technology is used to help students participate. Students with special needs experience difficulties almost in all aspects of their lives especially in schools. Because of their disabilities, different methods and different ways should be applied towards them, in order to make the process of learning easier. According to Westwood (2015) educators in US prefer the term “exceptional children”, rather than students with special needs. Exceptional children are described as having differences that occur to such an extent that they require additional services and modification to school practices. Drexler (2010) mentions that using technology for teaching purposes is considered to be beneficial and effective for these students, who require additional methods to be taught towards them. He states that the use of technological tools empowers learners to transcend the traditional concept of the classroom.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

The importance of English language is evident. Since being an international language, its role in society is becoming greater every day better. English language as the most spoken language around the world enables our students to be more sociable and supports them in

their daily life, so teachers and researchers always try to find the best methods and techniques to help their students acquire a language. English Language is the most common language recently, which has many advantages in the everyday life, when people are getting more enthusiastic everyday while practicing it. Nowadays, people interest toward learning English language has increased, but that seeks different methods and strategies to be applied towards the learners. “Approaches used for English language teaching and learning have been changing from time to time. The teaching and learning of the English language has never been easy. In fact, it is very challenging for both the educators and learners”. (Pritchard & Chamberlain, 1975, p. 48)

The need to learn English has increased recently knowing its significance and effectiveness. People need it for school, business, when they travel and more. “Children who have a chance to learn a foreign language at the same time have a chance to have many cultural patterns as a literature, music or arts because of exposure to the other cultures”. (Engstrom, 2009, p. 25)

“Teaching English is a real challenge for English teachers all over the world. With a variety of different skill levels in every classroom, teachers must employ effective strategies that allow each student to learn the material”. (Mason, 2006, p. 681). Supportive and effective tools to learn a language faster and easier, in that case English language are needed. Technology tools make the learning process more attractive and interactive compared to traditional classes, when the only source of information were books and teachers, especially when working with students with special needs.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Teaching with technology changes the perception and organization of the classroom both for teachers and students, when its use is beneficial and effective for students’ proficiency as second language learners. In the century of technology, knowing its impact it is impossible to not implement its tools in educational system. The increase of students’ motivation and interest leads to the implementation of technological tools regularly. Technology is considered as a beneficial and useful tool also, since it offers visual images when students can be more engaged to the learning process, since it improves the way they learn. Implementation of technology tools in the process of teaching and learning is a modern and

helpful strategy used very much recently by many teachers who work with students with disabilities. There may be some limitation of using technology tools from students with special needs who face some difficulties while using them. But, there is a solution for everything, when teachers and peers may collaborate and help each other. Since, every country tries to improve their educational system, the implementation of technology offers them effective results for students 'proficiency. Through technology tools teachers try to make their teaching more comprehensible, creative and interactive. "ICT, under the pedagogical conditions, may be one of the most important tools for teachers and students to develop crucial skills (cognitive, social and technological) so as to be able to respond, critically and creatively, to the need of the new social and economic reality that is constantly, changing." (Anastasiades, 2017, p. 17)

Presley & D'Andrea, (1976) discussed a time of great technological change and achievement of the last decades of the 20th century, when in public schools:

- Teachers using interactive whiteboards to post class notes that students download onto their laptops.
- Teachers using online digital video clips from daily newspapers to supplement social studies and history textbooks
- Students using computer-based reading programs to improve their vocabulary, fluency and writing skills
- Students creating multimedia projects in which they use their computers to conduct research, write the results, and print e report, as well as to create an electronic slide show to share with classmates. (Presley & D'Andrea, 1976, p. 11)

According to Stanley (2013) technology to teach and learn a second language can be used to: access different information about the language, it enables students to be exposed to the targeted language, it also has different entertaining materials (i.e. reading or listening for pleasure), creating texts, publishing student's work online in classroom's website or other sources, it also enables students to communicate and interact with other language users/learners

through online apps recommended by the teachers, to create community, manage and organize

learning, which can help students with special needs acquire easier a second language. So, technology used for educational purposes is considered very attractive and effective for

students with special needs, understanding better English language because it offers them new methods of seeing and acquiring words. “Technology can help “facilitate the attainment of learning goals for individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, move, read, write, understand English, sustain attention, organize, engage and remember”. (Favazza & Dalton, 2012, p. 134)

Since our students are very familiar with technology tools, the use of technology may be very attractive and effective to them. If used properly, it may be very useful to them to get a lot of information and acquire a language as well. During my classes, I mostly use different YouTube videos, games, music and PowerPoint presentations. The majority of my students progressed very much in creating electronic slide show and different presentations, using PowerPoint and Prezi. We often watch different movies, which help my students expand their vocabulary and acquire the language better. “Multimedia and other technologies can connect student learning in the classroom to real-life situations and authentic learning situations”. (Waxman & Padron, 1996, p. 341)

The Oxford Dictionary (2015) defines technology as digital or electronically based devices, resources or processes that facilitate the teacher and learners’ ability to think, perform and succeed.

Technology implementation brings creativity and interactivity into an inclusive classroom. Students and teachers engage together and develop their critical thinking and their creative spirit as well. It brings motivation too, while changing their environment, showing different videos, online games and presentations. Even students with different disabilities enjoy classes with technology tools, since the environment is not always the same as in traditional classes. Implementation of technology in English language classes inspires teamwork as well, which is a very good step students’ progress. “Opportunities for engaging in research and innovative practices in English language learning through technology are countless.” (Leonardo, 2017, p. 4)

Davison (2005) mentions that the use of technology has become a social practice as the use of English, so obviously a socio-cultural and critical analysis of the role of technology in English

language learning and teaching is needed because of the application of technology.

During my teaching experience, I have encountered many times the interest and engagement of my students, including students with special needs when I implemented the technology tools. Its strength to motivate them is evident. It helps them to change their everyday routine, when in most of their classes their only source of information is their teacher. It enhances their collaborative working and their engagement, compared with their traditional classes. “Educational technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning, indicating that helping people to learn is the primary and essential purpose of educational technology”. (Januszewski & Molenda, 2013, p. 17). There are many ways to use Technology to facilitate both teaching and learning. Technology offers many tools that help organize classes better and give good results.

Raihan and Lock (2012) have shown the following figure presenting some ways of how to use technology in the classroom:

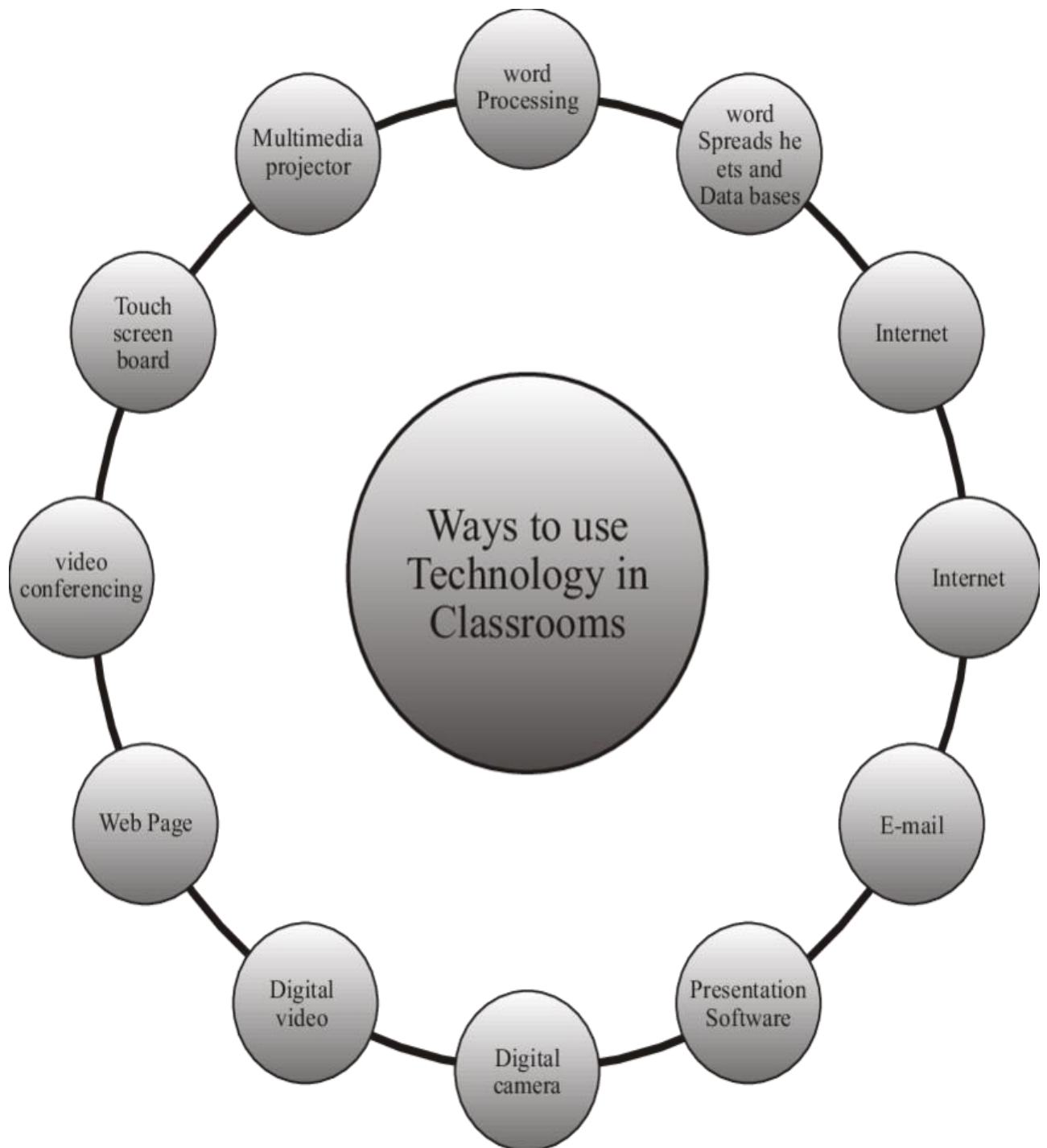


Fig.1 Technology use in the classroom. (Raihan & Lock, 2012, p. 26)

Internet

Internet is a wide source of information used from people to get the proper information they need for different reasons. Today, more than one billion users around the world connect to the Internet for a variety of reasons. (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 69). Internet is a limitless source of information with a comprehensive access to everyone, including teachers and learners with special needs for their process of learning and teaching. It has facilitated peoples 'lives for a long time. "Most educators agree that the Internet has great potential for education and that online classes need to be part of the K-12 learning environment". (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 101)

E-mail

E-mails are a preferred way of communication, used from many people for thousands of reasons. Except using for business and everyday purposes, e-mails can be used for educational purposes too. Teachers and students can communicate through emails for projects, homework and more. It helps students with special needs as well; to maintain contacts with their peers and develop their communication. Electronic mail (e-mail) has become a preferred means of communications for many businesses schools and individuals. (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 100)

PDA Software

PDA Software is available for a variety of uses, including personal productivity, business, communications, entertainment, multimedia and education. Students and teachers can benefit from PDA software designed for educational uses. (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 157)

Podcasting

Podcasting is a technology that is quickly becoming popular in education and already is popular with your digital students. Podcasts enable students and teachers to share all kinds of information with anyone at anytime. (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 196)

Office Applications

Office Applications are the most used ones enabling people write different reports and worksheets. Teachers use these applications during their process of teaching to facilitate their job and to make their classes more interesting and useful. “Creating worksheet, handouts, posters, newsletters, reports, spelling and grammar checking, presenting research data etc, can all be done effectively with these applications”. (Ivy, 2012, p. 208)

Multimedia Presentations

Multimedia Presentations are pretty much used by both students and teachers. Through them, students and teachers show us a very professional way of giving lessons. Presentations through PowerPoint and Prezi are the most used presentations given by teachers and students. They use projectors to make these interesting presentations, which enable them to be creative and collaborative. With the help of their teachers, students with special needs can create interesting slides including different topics too. “PowerPoint presentations can be used by teachers to present organized lectures, aid „visual“ and inattentive learners and prepare students for their professional life”. (Ivy, 2012, p. 208)

Touch screen board

Touch screen boards are very useful tools, which enable teachers be more creative and interesting in front of their students. Teachers may insert different pictures and videos in these boards, to make their classes easier and more successful.

As mentioned many times, technology tools have had a great impact and benefits in the system of education. Their effectiveness is evident, and their application is increasing. Through the following figure, Raihan and Lock (2012, p. 24) provided some of the goals that technology integration has in the process of teaching and learning:

:

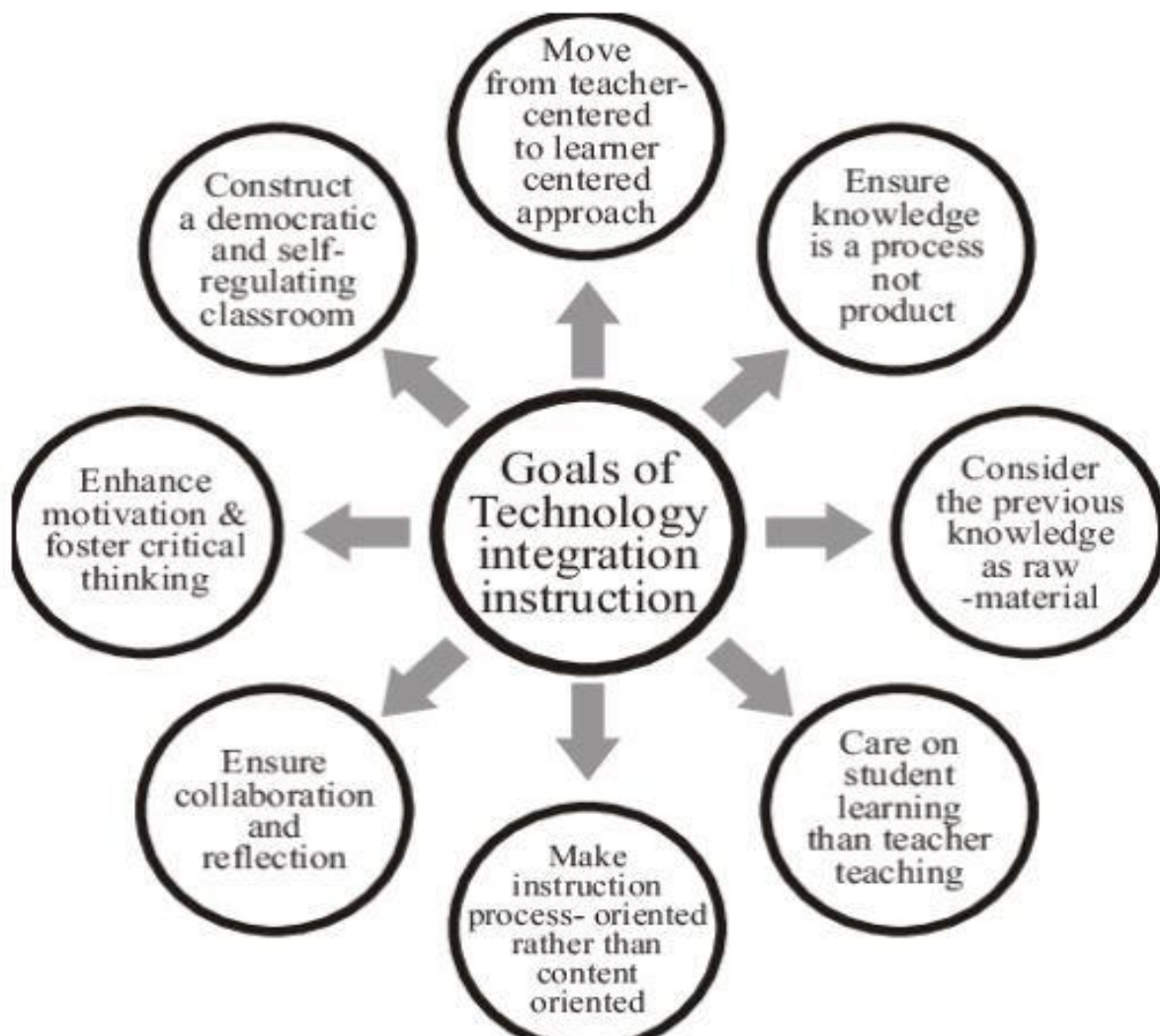


Fig.2 Goals of technology integration. (Raihan & Lock, 2012, p. 24)

Through the application of technology, classroom environment changes from traditional classes to modern classes. Learners have more space than in traditional classes. First goal of technology integration is to move from the teacher centered to learner centered approach. Of course, teacher should be there for anything their students need, but should not be the only source of information. Students can get many sources of information through the tools of technology. It connects with the other goal of using technology to foster critical thinking. Not all things should be served to students. They should try to find information and research for materials they need, in order to develop their critical thinking. Bringing good results from gathering information from the internet or exchanging emails with their mates and teachers, their motivation enhances everyday more. Teachers motivate their students by letting them decide and judge from their own perspectives. Technology use offers care on students' learning rather than teachers' teaching and ensures collaboration and reflection. While working with their peers, students exchange their experiences and reflect on their own learning. It makes instruction process-oriented rather than content oriented.

Pitler, Hubbell, and Kuhn (2012, p. 10) presented the nine categories of technology use in the classroom, that may help teachers make their classes more interesting and more attractive.

Category	Definition	Examples
Word Processing Applications	Applications that create documents in which the text can be displayed in linear or visual modes.	Google docs, Microsoft Word, Wardle
Organizing and Brainstorming Software	Software that helps users to organize thinking, connect and categorize ideas, and show processes	Web Inspiration, Smart Tools
Data collection and Analysis	Tools that allow users to gather and analyze data	Survey Monkey, Microsoft Excel, Clicker, Poll Everywhere

s Tools		
Communication and Collaboration Software	Software that replaces or enhances traditional forms of communication with video, audio, text, or any combination of the three; allows users to share and discuss ideas, pictures, web links etc.; and enables parties to work together even when geographically separated	Skype, Face Time, Type with .me, Face book, Twitter
Instructional Media (learner as consumer)	Technologies that provide or facilitate the creation of videos or recording that are intended for use in learning	Brain POP, Discovery Education Streaming and Khan Academy
Multimedia Creation (learner as producer)	Technologies that allow users to combine audio, video, music, pictures, drawings or any combination into a final product	PowerPoint, Keynote, Photoshop, photo, movie, Voice Thread.
Instructional Interactives	Technologies that are manipulated by the learner to enhance understanding of a skill or concept, including games, manipulative, and software that assesses the learner and differentiates the activity or curriculum based on the learner's needs	Start Chat
Database and Reference Resources	Resources that provides users with information and data	Wikipedia, Thesaurus etc
Kinesthetic Technology	Technologies that interact with the user's geographical or physical location and movements.	Nintendo Wii, X box, GPS devices.

Fig.3 The nine categories of technology use in the classroom. (Pitler, Hubbell, & Kuhn, 2012,

These categories facilitate students' learning and increase their motivation to acquire a new language, in that case English language. They help teachers organize better their classes. As shown in the figure above, these different programs and tools include applications that create documents in which the text can be displayed in linear or visual modes, software that helps users to organize thinking, connect and categorize ideas, and show processes, tools that allow users to gather and analyze data, technologies that provide or facilitate the creation of videos or recording that are intended for use in learning, technologies that allow users to combine audio, video, music, pictures, drawings or any combination into a final product, resources that provides users with information and data and many more application and tools. These are tools that may be used by many students, including students with special needs. Through word processing applications, these students may create different documents in which the text is written in English language and may be displayed in linear mode, they can write the new words they acquired through Microsoft Word. Also, they can use Communication and Collaboration Software such as Skype and Face Time or Face book to share and discuss ideas or pictures with their classmates. This make these students feel equal and loved by their classmates. Database and reference resources may also be used by students with different disabilities to find resources that provide them with information and data they search.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Teachers experience various students during their teaching career and you can never know if you will or will not have a student with special needs in your classroom. Students with special needs experience difficulties almost in all aspects of their lives especially in schools. Because of their disabilities, different methods and different ways of teaching should be applied towards them, in order to make the process of learning easier. "The classroom teacher is the main method of attitude of change or acceptance by peers of the student with a disability." (M.L. Dhawan, 2005, p. 5)

"In the most general terms, special education is education individualized and adjusted to accommodate the unique learning needs of students who are, in some domain of functioning, above or below what is considered normal in their culture and social context. Areas of need include impairments in the physical, intellectual, communication and social aspect of functioning." (Mazurek & Winzer, 2002, p. 17)

As we may know, students of all abilities and backgrounds want to be in a classroom that includes them all and conveys respect, but students with disabilities have more difficulties and challenges in the classroom setting and they need accommodation and consideration. It is teachers' responsibility to help students be inclusive in the classroom and help them improve their skills. Students with special needs require a special treatment and special methodologies while teaching them. Teachers should modify or if needed change all their teaching methods while working with these students compared to those teaching techniques and methods applied with regular students. In inclusive schools, when all students attend the same classes, teachers should engage all the students the same and enhance collaborative working. We as humans should accept each other as we are and help each other as we need.

“Cooperative learning is especially effective with students with disabilities. The types of adaption you choose will, of course depend on the needs and strengths of students with disabilities and the nature of the skills and concepts to be learned.” (Glatthorn & Tripp, 2013, p. 91)

Around the world, people have their own personalities and characteristics. They differ in their physical appearance, intelligence or even in their behaviors.

Bala & Digumarti, (2007) state that in classroom, some children deviate physically, mentally, socially and educationally from normal children. Such children are called exceptional children and they require special educational care and their adjustment problems have to be tackled in an exceptional manner.

According to them, the exceptional children can be categorized into four groups:

- Gifted children with a high level of intelligence or a special aptitude for music, painting, etc,
- Mentally retarded or handicapped children with a low level of intelligence.
- Physically handicapped children such as blind, deaf, dumb, etc., and
- Socially disadvantaged children such orphans, destitute, etc. (Bala & Digumarti, 2007, p. 6)

Exceptional children are described as having differences that occur to such an extent that they require additional services and modification to school practices. Students with special needs experience different disabilities, this may cause them having special requirements in specific fields. Those specific fields may involve: Autism, Down-syndrome, Visual impairments, Hearing impairments, Reading impairments, Writing impairments, Physical disabilities, OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder) etc.

Students with Autism

Autism is a disorder emphasized to a lot of children recently. Every child with autism is unique and special who needs special care and treatment. Autistic students need to be taught how to interact with others and be provided opportunities to develop relationships with other students.

“Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that manifests as impairments in three primary areas of functioning: communication and play, social relatedness, and restricted interests and activities.” (Freedman, 2010, p. 17). Pierangelo & Giuliani, (2012), described autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as a developmental disorder of neurobiological origin that can have lifelong effects on social interaction, ability to communicate ideas and feelings, imagination and establishment of relationships. As they mention, ASD is a neurological disability that is presumed to be present from birth and is always apparent before the age of three. Students with autism, in the first sight cannot be noticed, they look as normal children. “The manifestation varies across children and time. No two individuals with ASD are alike, even if they have the same diagnosis.” (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2012, p. 11)

“Students with ASD learn better with information presented visually as well as verbally. Also, they need to be taught how to interact with others and be provided opportunities to develop relationships with other students.” (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2012, p. 12)

(Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2012, p. 2), represent the general diagnostic criteria for autistic disorder as follows:

Impairments in social relatedness including deficits in any of four primary areas:

- Nonverbal communication (e.g. eye-contact, reading nonverbal cues)
- Peer interaction (does not develop developmentally appropriate peer relationship)

- Joint attention (does not seek to share enjoyment: no showing or pointing out of objects of interest)
- Emotional reciprocity (does not exhibit shared emotional experiences with others).

Impairments in communication in play including deficits in any of four primary areas:

- Delays in or lack of language development (without compensating with gestures or sounds)
- Impaired ability to sustain conversation
- Stereotyped or repetitive language use (includes idiosyncratic language)
- Lack of varied spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play

Restricted and repetitive or stereotyped play, interests or activities:

- Preoccupations and interests that are abnormal in intensity and/or focus
- Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines and/or rituals
- Motor stereotypes (e.g. hand/finger/flapping or flicking, repetitive jumping, complex body movements)

Students with Down syndrome

Down syndrome is also a disorder which is caused from the extra chromosome. It is much emphasized to the women who have an older age. Lorenz (1998) points out that Down syndrome is a genetic condition, caused by a failure in the cell division process. The majority of affected children have a third copy of chromosome 21 in all their cells, instead of the usual two, and this result in the baby having 47 chromosomes instead of 46.

The majorities of children with Down syndrome now attend regular schools, so we should never consider them as “different” but equal as other children in the world who need help and attention. “Down syndrome is one of the most common conditions leading almost universally to intellectual and physical disability and, although a great deal is known about the effects of the syndrome on growth and development, there is much left to understand about the implications for teaching and learning.” (Faragher & Clarke, 2014, p. 6)

According to Faragher & Clarke (2014), people with Down syndrome are people first of all, and are more like their family members than like other people with Down syndrome. Down syndrome is often diagnosed soon after birth.

“Down syndrome is the commonest genetic disease in the world population: affecting all countries, all races, and both sexes. There are some reports that identified paintings of persons with appearance of DS in paintings and from pictures from the middle age.” (Biltagi, 2009, p. 3)

Biltagi (2009) mentions that the risk for Down syndrome births is multi-factorial that includes both genetic and environmental factors and the risk for having a baby with trisomy 21 is significantly increased as a woman is getting older.

Students with Hearing impairments

Hearing impairments is a very problematic issue in the society. Hearing loss may be partial or total, caused by many factors, including these genetics too. It may cause many difficulties to many children, especially in the process of education.

“Hearing is the sensory pathway through which speech and verbal communication develop. The hearing impairment reduces the knowledge of the world around. It also affects adversely the child’s performance in learning”. (Bala & Digumarti, 2007, p. 170)

Once they are confirmed and classified as hearing impaired children, their specific needs should be assessed and educational programmes should be designed accordingly. (Bala & Digumarti, 2007, p. 189)

Reddy & Ramar (2004) present the following modifications of physical environment that are very essential to enhance the learning of the hearing, impaired children in general education classroom. According to them:

- The teacher may make changes in seating, such as moving students away from such sources of background noise as open windows and doors and noisy heating and cooling systems.
- The teacher can seat the hearing impaired students in the front of the room with their chair or desks turned slightly so that they can see the faces of all other students.

- The teacher can permit free movement around the classroom, so that hearing impaired children can reduce the distance between themselves and speakers.
- Hearing impaired students may be allowed to change their seats as activities change.
- Positioning of speakers is also very important. Their faces must be illuminated even when the room is darkened for studies, videotapes, and films. This will facilitate speech reading.
- Classroom for hearing impaired students must be located away from high traffic and noise areas such as groups, cafeterias and playgrounds.
- Though expensive, the school authorities can take the effort to reduce classroom noise by carpeting floors, draping windows and covering walls with materials that absorb extraneous such as corkboard or Styrofoam sheets.

According to Reddy & Ramar (2004), written materials are very important such as diagrams, pictures, graphs and graphic outlines to facilitate students' with hearing impairments learning. Teachers should modify these written materials in order to succeed in their teaching process. "Many different factors contribute to a hearing impairment. Some of the known reasons may be due to genetic or hereditary factors, representing one of the leading causes of deafness in children. Down syndrome is another factor resulting in hearing loss. Infections are another common cause of hearing impairment." (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2013, p. 113)

OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder)

"Obsessive- compulsive disorder or shortly OCD is characterized by obsessions or compulsions. Obsessions are repetitive, intrusive thoughts that are difficult to suppress. Compulsions are repetitive mental or physical rituals that are undertaken either in stereotyped way or in response to instructive thoughts." (Grant, Chamerlain, & Odlaug, 2014, p. 159).

Hyman & DuFrene (2008), gave a definition for both these terms:

Obsessions are persistent, unwanted thoughts, feelings, or impulses that intrude in your mind. They usually incorporate themes of potential harm or danger to yourself, or more often, to others. Obsessions cause excessive anxiety, worry and doubt. (Hyman & DuFrene, 2008, p. 2)

Compulsions are mental acts or repetitive behaviors you perform in an attempt to relieve or prevent the anxiety, worry or doubt caused by your obsessions. You may feel that your compulsive behaviors have a seemingly magical power to prevent or avert dreaded events such as death, illness, or some other feared misfortune. (Hyman & DuFrene, 2008, p. 3)

Obsessions and compulsions are often interrelated. Obsessions usually begin with persistent doubt, which is why OCD is sometimes referred to as “doubting disease”. (Hyman & DuFrene, 2008, p. 4)

Its symptoms can appear at any point within the life cycle but most commonly begin during childhood, adolescence, or young adulthood. Many people with OCD experience their first symptoms during childhood, as repetitive touching, tapping, or counting behaviors, obsessions with dirt, germs or persistent and repetitive demands for reassurance from their parents. (Hyman & DuFrene, 2008, p. 8)

Students with Visual impairments

Blindness and visual impairment affect how a child learns, not what a child learns. One of the most important things to remember about your child who is visually impaired is that he or she can learn almost anything that anyone else learns but he or she has to learn it in a different way. (Hyman & DuFrene, 2008, p. 9)

LaVenture, New York, explains very well that students who are visually impaired and other students with disabilities have a wide range of unique and specialized needs that a regular classroom teacher does not have the expertise to address. For this reason, a variety of professionals typically work with children who are visually impaired to deliver educational services. They may include:

- A regular classroom teacher
- A teacher of students with visual impairments
- An orientation and mobility instructor
- A psychologist
- An occupational therapist
- A physical therapist
- A speech and language therapist

- An audiologist
- An ophthalmologist
- An optometrist (LaVenture, New York, p. 16)

Visually impaired students must develop expertise in using assistive technology, and they must develop skills in performing other complex tasks. For educators of students with visual impairments, then, the true goal of teaching the use of assistive technology is to enable students to apply technology appropriately to complete important educational goals. (Presley & D'Andrea, 1976, p. 13). “Students with visual impairments may use software with text enlargement features.” (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 179)

The growing presence of computers in everyone’s lives has generated an awareness of the need to address computing requirements for those with physical limitations. Today, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all schools ensure that students with all type of special needs are not excluded from participation in, or denied access to, educational programs or activities. In addition to speech recognition, which is ideal for students who are visually impaired, other devices are available. (Shelly, Cashman, Gunte, & Gunter, 2008, p. 247)

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

As we may know, students of all abilities and backgrounds want to be in a classroom that makes them feel equal and include them all, but students with disabilities have more difficulties and challenges in the classroom setting and they need special accommodation and consideration. It is society’s responsibility to help students be inclusive in the classroom and help them improve their skills. In developed countries these students have special schools, but many countries cannot provide having a special school and the children attend school together with normal children. According to Westwood (1997), the inclusive schooling movement, building upon the earlier trend toward mainstream integration of students with disabilities, presents the view that all children have the right to be educated in regular schools and to have an equal opportunity to participate in the mainstream curriculum.

Over the past years, students with different disabilities have been integrated in mainstream classes, rather than special groups. The new curriculum that has been implemented in Kosovo the recent years, foresees the integration of these students in the normal classes. Many of

students, who previously have had to attend special groups, now attend the mainstream classes like majority of students. That may be a good opportunity for these problems with different disabilities to interact and engage with their classmates, to feel equal and cooperate with them. But, some advantages of inclusive classroom may be evident as well. It depends from student's disabilities how good they can perform or be independent in these classes. Most of them may need special care and professional people around them.

“The practical problems surrounding inclusions are most obvious in the case of individuals with severe and multiple disabilities, since many of these students require a high degree and physical care and management over and above their special educational needs.” (Westwood, 1997, p. 2)

Inclusion means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. It involves regular schools and classroom genuinely adapting and changing to meet the needs of all children, as well as celebrating and valuing differences. (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005, p. 2)

The problems faced by people with disabilities, their families and their teachers

Dealing with students it is not easy for any teacher, since every student is different and seeks special care and attention. It gets even more difficult while dealing with students with any disability. As a teacher you should be emotionally and professionally prepared when starting to work with students, especially with students with special needs. Continually, teachers are triggered by many problems and difficulties while working with them. Special methods and methodology should be applied towards them. The same happens with parents of students with special needs. It is even difficult for them to deal with different challenges and prejudice. “Systematic problems confound the many challenges that families of children with disabilities face on a daily basis. First and foremost, individuals and families must come to grips with that fact of the disability and deal with the complex emotions it inevitably produces.” (Cohen, 2009, p. 9)

According to Cohen (2009), children with special needs, their families as well, constantly are triggered by many challenges, prejudice, insults or disappointments. But, the challenges for

them do not end there. Families are highly depended on educators and professionals, to understand their children's disabilities and most of the time feel not fully included and discriminated due to their children's disabilities.

“Most parents of nondisabled children can comfortably choose to be more involved if that is their desire. They must remain actively engaged in every activity in which their child participates; they must select providers, monitor progress, implement programs, check on communication, assure that other teachers or providers are told what the primary providers have agreed to, ensure that information follows the child from place and year to year, and more.” (Cohen, 2009, p. 21)

Bully and refuse is another problem faced by these children and their families. There are many cases when students with special needs are bullied from their classmates for their appearance or for any disability they possess. Their classmates refuse their integration on their society, which makes them feel neglected and unwanted. “Educationalists and researchers agree that students with special needs are at particular risk from bullying at school. Within the public school system, students who are disabled or those who are perceptibly different from the mainstream are more likely to be targets of bullying than their able-bodied or less-different peers “. (Rivers, Duncan, & Besag, 2007)

Something should be done by competent people. People should raise their awareness and be tolerant and understandable. Children should be taught at home to accept and respect people as they are. They should be taught to help people and consider them equal. Educators at school should integrate these students in different activities and enhance collaboration between each student too. Their primary concern should be to choose the appropriate way to work with them and make them feel desirable and comfortable. Presley & D'Andrea,(1976) suggest for teachers who work with students with special needs, to choose the appropriate assistive technology software when they consider the particular disability of the learner, the learner's strength and the learner's academic needs. A challenged may need assistance with reading or with communication or with organizing and processing new information.

The use of Technology tools to facilitate learning process.

The implementation of technology tools in language classroom is rising every day. Their effectiveness in the education system has made its integration necessary. Different students have different problems, which make the process of learning harder. Assistive technology facilitates both process of learning and teaching and motivates these students in better understanding and performance. Based on my teaching experience, students with special needs, especially students with autism have a special connection with technology. Technology has a great role, serving as a strength and motivation for achieving goals for autistic children and learning skills for more independent functioning. Parents and teachers are paying a special attention to the implementation of technological tools and multimedia in the classrooms with autistic students.

“With the advent of mobile technologies, teachers, therapists, and parents are buying iPads, iPod Touch, I phones, and other mobile tools and apps to help children with ASD learn and practice communication, academic and social skills. Mobile tools are being researched for their effectiveness; anecdotal accounts from users indicate that these devices are very motivating, visually appealing, and enjoyable “. (Ennis - Cole, 2015, p. 78)

Based on my teaching experience with autistic students, I have noticed that technology use helps and facilitates a lot students' learning. One of the most difficulties these students have is communication, so technology helps these students through its tools to communicate and express their needs. The application of technology also increases their independence. Ennis - Cole (2015) consider that technology should be matched with the abilities of the learner, and it should add to the learner's educational experience. Based on that, learners with ASD can benefit from the use of computerized tools; they can be invaluable for repetition, immediate feedback, practice, visual presentations, performance assessments, collaboration, and adjusting presentations based on the student's ability.

“Pioneering technologies such as Electronics Toys, interactive Tabletop and interactive floor/wall projectors have been potential in training diverse skills e.g. social skills, communication, motor skills, balancing to children with ASD. Computer technology is preferable among children with ASD because it is reliable, free from social demands, predictable and specific”. (Murray, 2008, p. 218).

Ryba & Selby (2004), state that information communication technology (ICT) can assist us to become better communicators and describe education as a process of sharing information and communicating and computers as powerful partners in this process.

“Using technology tools may be very efficient for many people especially for those with special needs, in that case for students with Down syndrome. The phenomenal rise in the popularity of e-mail and the Internet indicate that the ability to use information and communication technology is very useful to students with Down syndrome.” (Ryba & Selby, 2004, p. 4)

Opportunities for adults with Down syndrome to use Internet have expanded greatly. The internet can now be used to locate information on topics of interest, communicate with friends via e-mail and to play games for personal entertainment. (Ryba & Selby, 2004, p. 5)

According to Ryba & Selby (2004), helpful features of ICT for learning include:

- Motivation and engagement
- Repeated opportunities for success
- Internal attributions and locus of control
- Self-pacing and consistent feedback
- Exploration of personal interests.

Due to the technology tools, learning environment is becoming easier and interesting. Students can be assisted with technology tools in a number of ways which facilitates their learning process. “Hearing impaired students can be assisted with technology tools in a number of ways, including closed captioning, audio amplification and cochlear implants. Closed captioning (presenting spoken words as text on a screen) can be used in classrooms to help hearing-impaired students follow a teacher’s lectures or explanations. Other ways to accomplish the same goal is through audio amplification and cochlear implants.” (Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009, p. 218)

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction of the research design and methodology

This chapter describes the design of the experimental research regarding the effectiveness of the use of technology to teach English to the students with special needs. This section will provide information about the methodology of the study, that is, information about the participants, instruments of research, main research methodology as well as the procedure of the data analysis. It provides gathered data with the main concern if the use of technology is effective on learning English language by students with special needs from different schools in Kosovo and the difficulties that their teachers and parents have while dealing with these students.

Participants

The participants of this study were 22 English teachers, 20 parents of students with disabilities and 20 students of the five primary schools in Gjilan and of the special school “Nënë Tereza” in Prizren. The participants were approached easily and quantitative and qualitative researches were conducted. (A survey was formulated, interviews were held and observation with students with disabilities was done). The reason why these schools were chosen is because of the largest number of students with special needs who attend their learning process. In total, twenty two questionnaires were distributed to the English teachers where eight questionnaires were distributed in primary school “Thimi Mitko” in Gjilan, four questionnaires were distributed in primary school “Rexhep Elmazi” in Gjilan, three were distributed in primary school “Selami Hallaçi” in Gjilan, three of the questionnaires were distributed in primary school “Abaz Ajeti” in Gjilan, two of them were distributed in primary school “Dëshmorët e Kombit”- Livoç and two were distributed in the special school “Nënë Tereza” in Prizren. Teachers were approached easily. They filled the questionnaires during the breaks in the hallway, in the relevant schools where they work. A short oral explanation related to the research was given to twenty teachers in case they did not understand what the aim of this particular research was. Also, before distribution the teachers were told that their answers would be confidential and will not be misused. While completing the questionnaires, none of the teachers had any uncertainty related to the questions and the time given was sufficient for completion. Afterwards, the questionnaires were collected, and there was no problem during the distribution of the questionnaires. Among twenty two teachers, all of them were females. On the other hand, the interviews with parents of the children with

special needs were held at proper schools, where their children attend their learning process. Twenty parents accepted my invitation for the interview, when they were approached easily as well, with the help of teachers and directors of these schools. The fact that they hope for a better future for their children made them accept my invitations for the interview. I explained the aim of the interview to them and they did not hesitate to answer. On the meantime, during one month I observed 20 students of these schools twice a week. During a week in close cooperation with their teachers, we had one class using technology tools, and one class using only the book as a source of information. This process was the same until the end. Out of eight classes I observed students with special needs, who were attending the same schools with regular students (excepting the students in the special school “Nene Tereza” in Prizren), four of their classes were with technology tools and four of them were without them.

Procedure

After the formulation of the questions and preparation of the interview, the questionnaires were ready to be distributed and the interview was ready to be held. A special permission was needed from competent people in these schools in order to fill the questions and to observe their students for some weeks. In total, twenty two questionnaires were distributed to the professors of these schools who were all English teachers and twenty parents of students with special needs attending these schools were interviewed. A short oral explanation related to the research was given to the professors and parents. Also, before distribution of questionnaires and before the interview both teachers and parents were told that their answers would be confidential and will not be misused.

Research questions

- How do students with special needs prefer to learn English?
- Do teachers use visual tools to help stimulate ideas of students with special needs and their inclusion in the learning process?
- What methods do teachers use to keep their students with special needs engaged?
- Are students with special needs able to work independently on the given assignments?
- What is the role of technology on teaching English to the students with disabilities?

- Do students with special needs find interesting the use of technology as a supportive tool to their learning?

Main Study Research

The educational system in Kosovo was a bit old- fashioned until the recent years, where the teachers used to talk and students used to listen to their speeches. Things have started to change recently. New methods and strategies started to be implemented in the overall schools of Kosovo. Scientists and educators tried and still try to improve educational system by using modern strategies everyday better. One of them is the application of technology tools. It is an issue in Kosovo, where technology use is part of the new curriculum too, where teachers find out interesting and motivating materials to engage their students. The new curriculum in Kosovo, foresees that students with disabilities should attend the same classes with regular students. This makes the teaching and learning process even difficult. But, to facilitate both teaching and learning, the application of technology is made possible and necessary. The use of technology in the English classes can make the learning process more attractive and interesting as well. This is the reason why I decided to compare the difference of teaching English with students with special needs through traditional way comparing to teaching it through the application of technology. To find out the effectiveness of using technology on learning English of students with disabilities and if the students with special needs manage to learn English better, both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used. The first measuring instrument was designed in the form of a questionnaire that was conducted with twenty two teachers of six primary schools in Gjilan and Prizren. The survey was constructed in eighteen questions and was translated into the Albanian language too for teachers who find easier to answer in their native language. Gender and the place of work were required from the participants in the survey. In all the questions the participants were asked to choose one of the options given. In some questions there was also space to give reasons about the questions. Another instrument was an interview with twenty parents who have children with disabilities attending these six primary schools in Gjilan and Prizren. I prepared ten questions for them, regarding the difficulties they as parents face with their children, the progress of their children at school and their collaboration with teachers of their children. And the last instrument used in this research was the observation form with students with disabilities in

these schools, where I observed them for four weeks, twice a week, to understand the effectiveness of using technology while teaching students with special needs English and their learning English through traditional way comparing to learning it through the application of technology. The results and data will be analyzed and discussed further.

CHAPTER IV: STUDY RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

This chapter deals with analysis and findings of this particular research. The information are based on the data collected from the participants. The results taken by the English teachers who helped in completing the questionnaire and parents who answered the questions of my interview were very informative. The observation of students with special needs in these particular schools was important as well. The data obtained during this research study were qualitative (interview and observation) and quantitative (questionnaire). These data were obtained from an observation with some students with special needs, done in some of the primary schools in Gjilan and the special school “Nene Tereza” in Prizren, from a questionnaire conducted with twenty-two English language teachers and from an interview held with twenty parents of students with special needs in these particular schools. Charts are used for further visual explanations. Some of the findings drawn out from the data analysis are given below.

The results and discussion from the teachers’ questionnaires

The use of technology to teach English to the students with special needs is effective and beneficial for them.

Working with students with special needs is very challenging.

In order to test these hypotheses a questionnaire was done with 22 English teachers who were all females, from different primary schools in Gjilan and Prizren, which was conducted in eighteen questions (see Appendix 1). There were some extra copies of questionnaires in Albanian language since anyone might have easier to write in Albanian (see Appendix 2). The results of questionnaires are presented in the charts below in order to be clearly understandable.

1. Does your class include students with the following needs? (Circle)

22 responses

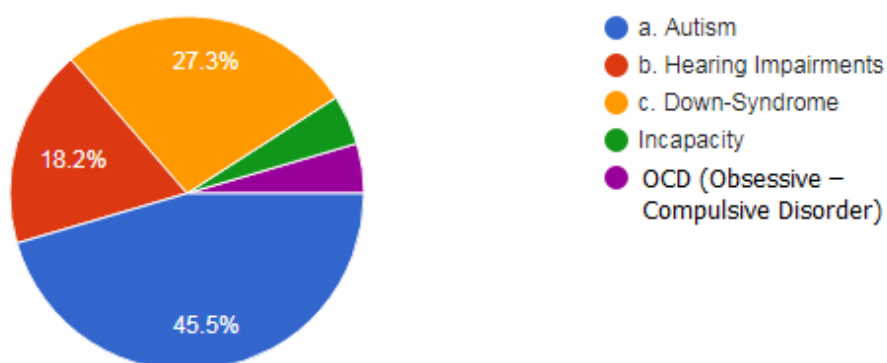


Fig.4 Types of special needs students

Based on this chart it is clearly seen that the majority of students attending these primary schools are students with autism and Down syndrome. In their classes the English professors also have students with Hearing Impairments, with OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and with lower intelligence than other students in their classes.

2. What classes do you have? (Circle)

22 responses

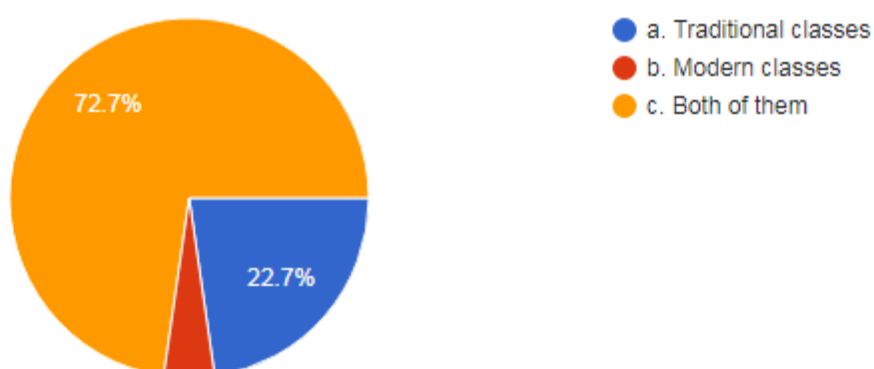


Fig.5 Classes that English teachers have

Asked about classes the English professors of all these primary schools have, the majority of them claimed that they have both traditional and modern classes during their teaching process, 22.7 % of them responded that their classes are only traditional whereas 5% of them responded that they have modern classes with their students with special needs.

3. Do you follow a pre-arranged plan with your special needs students? (Circle)

22 responses

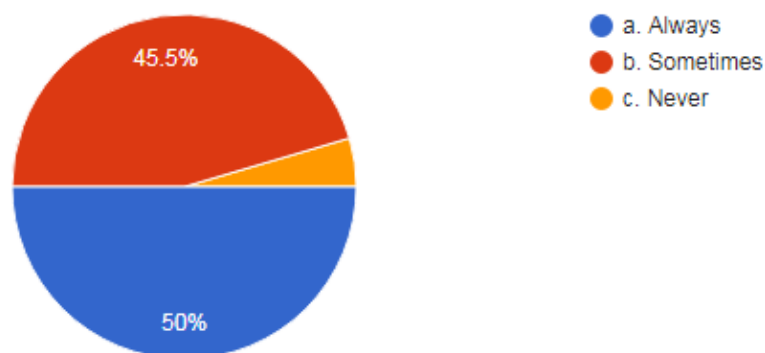


Fig.6 Use of pre-arranged plans

Based on the answers, most of the respondents always use a pre-arranged plan during their teaching; some of them sometimes use a pre-arranged plan, while just a minority of them prefers to not follow a pre-arranged plan through their classes. Harmer (2007), states that good teachers recognize that their plans are only prototypes and they may have to abandon some or all them if things are going too fast or too slow. According to him good teachers are flexible.

4. How do students with special needs learn? (Circle)

22 responses

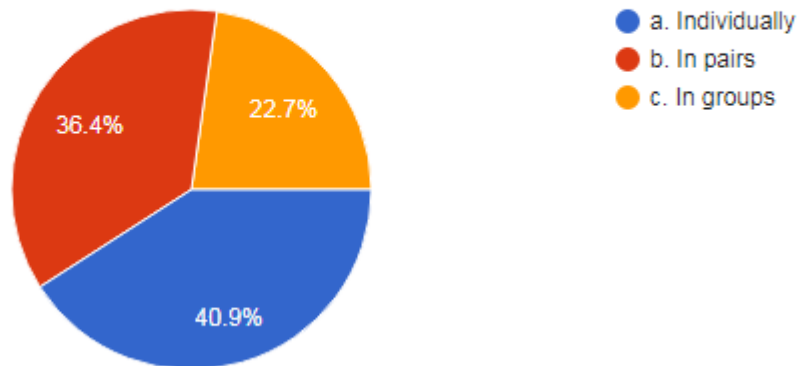


Fig.7 The way students with special needs work.

Most of the teachers prefer that children with special needs to learn and work individually during their lessons, a part of them stated that their students with special needs learn in pairs, whereas a small number of participants claimed that in groups is their favorite method to practice with their students.

5. Do students with special needs cooperate with other classmates? (Circle)

22 responses

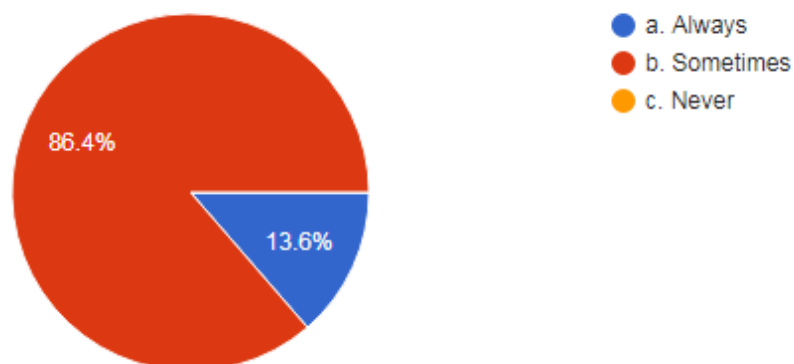


Fig.8 Cooperation between peers

Based on this chart, it is seen that majority of students cooperate with other classmates only in some cases, but there is a number of them who always cooperate with their classmates. Teachers, who claimed that their students in most cases learn in groups during their classes, stated that these students always cooperate with each-other. Cooperating with each-other helps students with special needs to express themselves freely during the English classes and encourages them to communicate and participate better. But there are cases when a number of students hesitate to express or interact or do not express freely at all. “Both pair-work and group-work give the students chances for greater independence. Because they are working together without the teacher controlling every move, they take some of their own learning decisions, and can work without the pressure of the whole class listening to what they are doing.” (Harmer, 2007, p. 21)

6. How do students with special needs prefer to learn English? (Circle)

22 responses

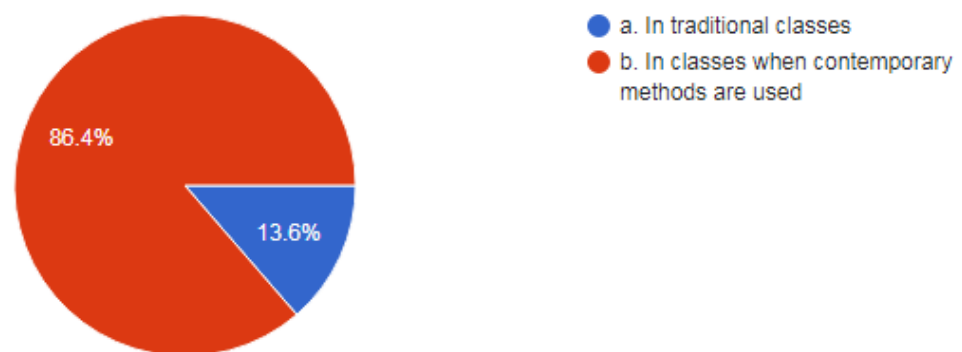


Fig.9 The way students with special needs prefer to learn English

Asked if students with special needs prefer to learn English in traditional classes or in classes when contemporary methods are used, majority of the teachers responded that these children prefer classes with contemporary methods and only a minority of them responded that their students prefer traditional classes. Respondents stated that they use different methods to keep their students engaged such as direct method, communicative approach, constructivism method and ABA method- based on the reinforcement. Integration of different methods such as: kinesthetic learning and game-based learning, personalized learning are the best methods a teacher considered to use with these students. One respondent claimed that she uses the

same methods she uses with other students, but sometimes when necessary she repeats instructions and offers additional information. Other methods used are methods which stimulate socializing and make learning appealing to them and every other student, such as creative activities which are used from some of the respondents. Majority of them stated that they integrate visual tools which are attractive such as involving videos, music and colors to keep students with special needs engaged and alert throughout the class. Some of them play different games to make the classes more effective and some of them prepare extra sheets of paper with different exercises appropriate for them in order to engage these students equally in games and activities.

8. Do you think that using technology tools or multimedia help your students with special needs acquire English Language better than in traditional classes?

22 responses

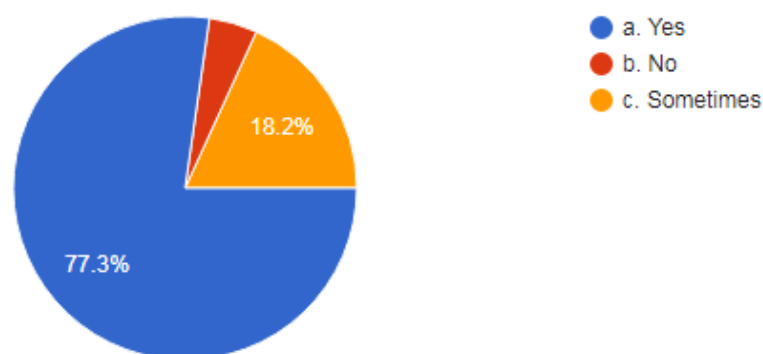


Fig.10 The effectiveness of using technology tools and multimedia during English classes

Asked if the role of technology tools and multimedia is important for students with different disabilities to learn English language, English teachers who answered the questionnaire questions consider technology as a very helpful tool which helps them in their teaching process. Technology helps teachers to facilitate the understanding of the language for their students and develop their critical thinking. Based on their answers, majority of them considered classes with technological tools and multimedia as supportive ones to learn and

acquire English Language better than in traditional classes. Whereas, a small number of respondents claimed that in traditional classes these students acquire better English language.

9. Do you use any visual tools to help stimulate ideas of students with special needs and their inclusion in the learning process? (Circle)

22 responses

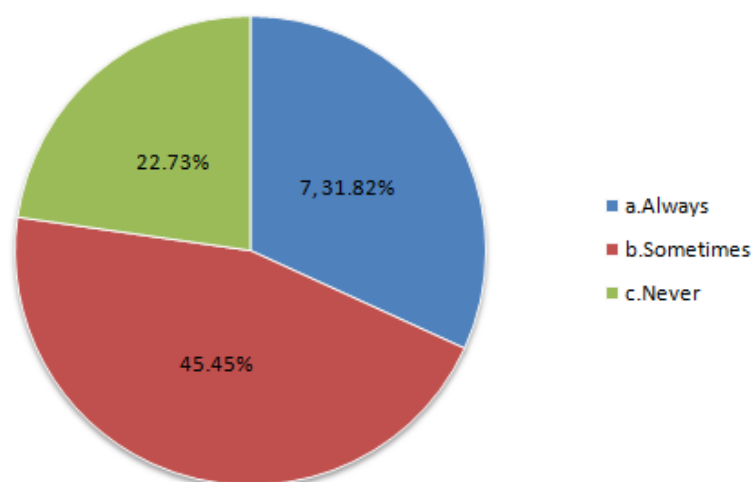


Fig.11 The usage of visual tools in learning process

In order to keep their students engaged and help them in English Language Acquisition, majority of respondents who are teachers from primary schools in Gjilan and in Prizren argued that they use different methods with their special needs students. Based on this chart, 31.8% of the respondents always use visual tools to help stimulate ideas of students with special needs and their inclusion in the learning process, 45,5% of them do sometimes use visual tools whereas 22.7% of them do never use visual tools for the inclusion of their students in the learning process. Respondents who use visual tools to help their students acquire easier English language mentioned some of the following tools that they use in their process of teaching. Projectors, laptops, mobile phones, videos and pictures are mostly used in their classes to support the inclusive teaching. Majority of these teachers mentioned that they play different games in laptops, watch videos and listen to music videos with contents learning in the target language. A respondent stated that she uses Power Point presentations and online quizzes where students are divided into groups and have to cooperate together. She also mentioned you tube videos and tasks where they show creativity while using

technology tools. Smart boards are also used from these teachers. One teacher mentioned that she usually uses a screen projector, which enables her students with special needs a deeper understanding of a certain topic when it is visually presented in such form. Printed materials, pictures and cards are also mentioned as visual tools used for better understating. Visual performance, receptive language, motor imitation and communication are the rest of methods that some of the English teachers usually use with their special needs students.

Asked if their students with special needs like the environment with technology and how they respond toward classes with technology tools, based on their response, it is clearly seen that the majority of them engage better and like classes with technology tools and multimedia. Teachers claim that their students find the environment with technology tools more attractive and are more focused. They say that these tools help them collaborate and interact better with their peers and with society. They get motivated and focused because they like the atmosphere when different tools are used during classes because they are more engaged. They found it amusing and noticed that the implementation of technology tools stimulate an enthusiastic interaction afterward. Teachers also responded that their students in some cases have a lot of fun and find technology interesting but in some cases it depends on their mood. Based on the responses of these English teachers, I understood that they feel comfortable and are more involved when using multimedia and technology tools.

13. Have you achieved satisfying results with the methods you are currently using with students with special needs? (Circle)

22 responses

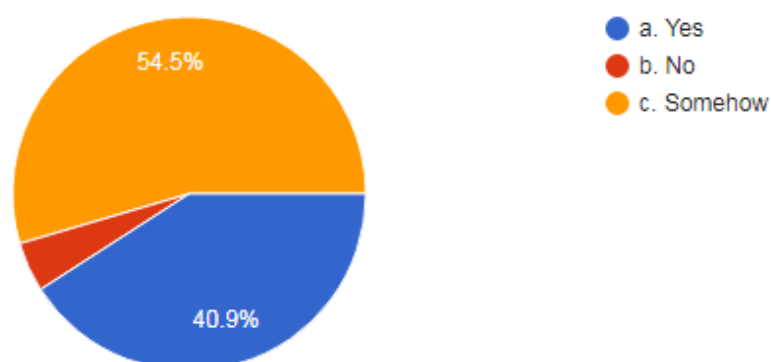


Fig.12 The satisfaction by the usage of the current methods

Asked if these teachers use the same methods with all their students, most of the English teachers claimed that the methods they use vary depending on the students' disability. 55.4% of them showed that they somehow achieved satisfying results with their methods they are currently using with their students with special needs, while 40.9% have achieved satisfying results with the methods they are currently using with the special needs students. Due to the fact that almost all of the English professors do check if their students understood when they give instruction, with the collecting results I faced that the special needs students are not always able to work independently on the given assignments from their English teachers.

14. Do you use any game or activity in order to make the English class more attractive? (Circle)

22 responses

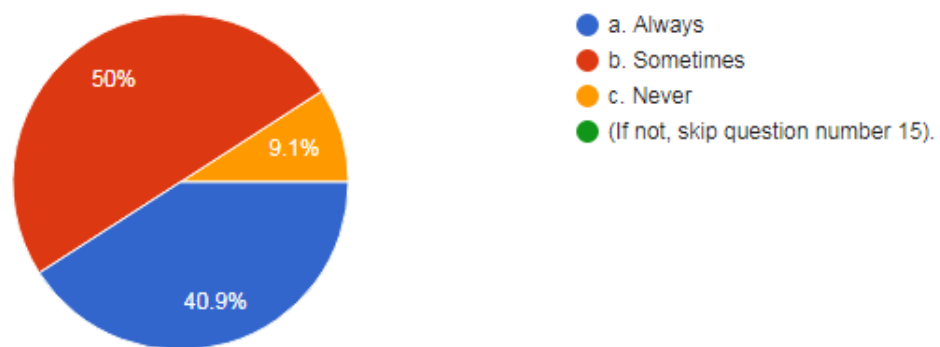


Fig.13 The usage of games and activities during the English classes

Asked if they use different games or activities to make their English classes more attractive, majority of them claimed that they sometime use, a number of them responded that always use while there was a minority of them who never use games or activities to make their English classes more attractive. The ones who use activities and games mentioned some of them as follow: vocabulary games and energizers, broken phone, teaming games, coloring, puzzles, fruit naming game, guessing game, Pictionary, mime, board game, games that include grammar and speaking and so forth. Some of the teachers stated that if they learn numbers, through the game its more easy for children with special needs to learn numbers, for example they make a small group in circle form where teacher say to them numbers from 1-5 and they repeat after their teacher, than to make a group who have number 1, 2 and so on.

16. How much have students with special needs managed to learn English? (Circle)

22 responses

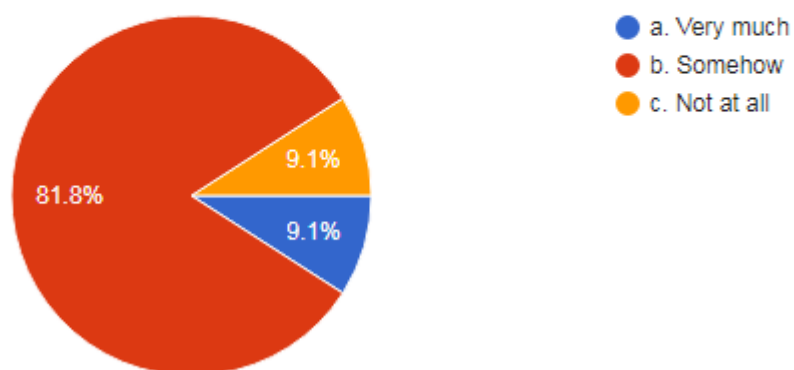


Fig.14 How much have students with special needs managed to learn English

Based on this chart, 81.8% of the students with special needs attending these classes, somehow managed to learn English language, 9.1% of them managed to learn it very much, whereas 9.1% of them have not managed to learn English language at all.

17. Do you always achieve your objectives during your class? (Circle)

22 responses

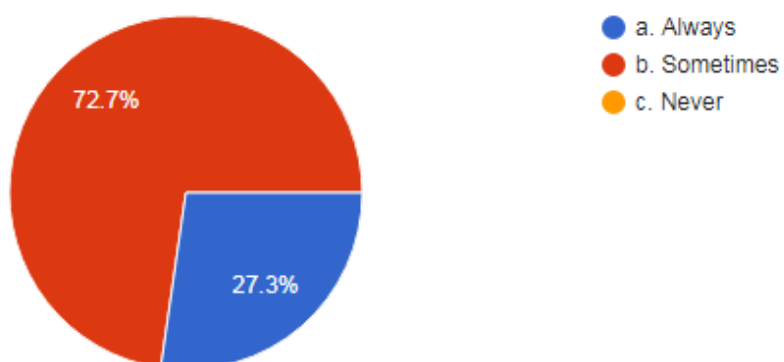


Fig.15 The achieved objectives during English classes

Based on these results, majority of these students sometimes achieve their objectives during their classes, meanwhile there are some teachers who have always managed to achieve their objectives during their classes.

Teachers were asked to state any barrier or challenge that they experience when including each of the following group in their daily practice and how do they attempt to overcome. Based on their answers, it is evident that they face with a lot of challenges while dealing with students with different disabilities. A teacher stated that sometimes students with special needs can't be focused and they are not in the mood to learn, so her teacher tries to change the approach and do something based on their feelings. Another teacher answered that many times these students lose their attention, but immediately their teacher manages the situation by playing games or singing different songs which help them to overcome those barriers and prejudice and they are all happy. Students don't respond positively when different tasks are given, so it is very important to keep them close and speak to them with kindness so at least they don't become aggressive. A teacher claims that in some cases she feels satisfied if at least students don't take any action at all because all the class becomes nervous and objectives of the lesson are not achieved because class is not capable to. Usually students with disabilities find it hard to focus during classes. Usually games and kinesthetic learning bring their focus back to learning. Teachers in our country are not trained to teach students with disabilities, and sometimes dealing with them takes our time and removes the attention from the rest of the class. Teaching students with special needs is a challenge, we have to make sure that they are learning and they are being treated with respect by their classmates because there are cases when they are treated cruelly. Some of the teachers responded that it is very difficult to deal with students with special needs but somehow they manage to engage them in the classroom. Pinpointing the attention of the student can be sometimes a problem, but throughout different and new ways of interaction it can be easily achieved. Lack of adequate tools provided by school, lack of help in class (assistant teacher) and small classrooms are also challenges mentioned by one respondent. It is challenging to constantly take their attention or to make sure if they are making improvements. There are also many challenges about school environment regarding the students such as: lack of technology tools at school, lack of special material for each group of students, lack of extra-curricular activities in these schools and more. Most of the teachers try to speak to them in person and together find the best method to pass the obstacles in learning. It is very challenging working with students with special needs, because in the schools that they work they do not have

conditions for those students. Some of them claimed that it would be easier if they would have a classroom of their own (English cabinet). There they would have all the needed tools for making an English class easier for all the students, including students with special needs. They stated that some of the students are more interested some of them are less, but there are students who do not like learning English. Another barrier is their difficulty in concentration. A teacher claimed that the challenge in the inclusion of students with special needs is until the moment when the student accepts to complete or work in the task that is given. She overcomes these challenges when her students with special needs accept the task with ease, depending on the way the task is done.

According to the results of the questionnaires, classes with technology tools seem to be more effective than traditional classes, for students with different disabilities attending the mentioned primary schools. This supports the hypothesis that the use of technology to teach English to the students with special needs is effective and beneficial for them. Also, based on the results of the questionnaires, it is concluded that teachers experience different barriers and challenges in their daily practice. The hypothesis “working with special needs students is very challenging” is also proved and confirmed. Challenges are present during the journey of achieving the desired results.

The results and discussion from parents’ interview

In order to find out the parents’ perspectives and challenges regarding the system of education and every day issues including teachers and students with disabilities, an interview was held with 20 parents of 20 students with disabilities in the same schools the questionnaires were conducted with 22 English teachers (see Appendix. 3). The interview was held in Albanian language since it was easier for parents to respond in Albanian (their native language), (see Appendix 4). Parents did not hesitate to accept my invitation for the interview and they were told that the data of the interview will be confidential and will not be misused. The interview included 11 questions, and its aim was to test the following hypothesis.

The role of the teacher in the classroom is very important for students with special needs and technology allows teachers to easily differentiate

The answers are presented and analyzed as follows:

- Are you satisfied with the teachers at the school where your child attends the learning process?

Majority of parents' answers were positive regarding that question, stating that teachers are doing a good job with their children. But there were also some parents who were not very satisfied with the teachers at the primary schools their children attend their learning process. A parent stated that he was moderately satisfied, because they don't give special treatment to his child and the collaboration between him as a parent and his child's teacher lack, which is essential to make educational decisions together. Another one responded that he is somehow satisfied, because the school doesn't have many specialized teachers to work with children and the others are assistants and they don't have the power and the role as teachers, because assistants are not allowed to do anything without the permission of the teachers.

- Did you have any problematic issue with any educator of your child?

Asked if they struggle with any problematic issue with any educator of their children, almost all of them responded that they didn't have problems with these teachers. One of the respondent stated that once she had a debate with one of the teachers and the reason was because her child couldn't do the task that was given, it was not in its level and the teacher's attitude wasn't appropriate toward her child. Whereas another parent responded that he did not have problematic issues directly with the teacher, but her child had problems with some of the classmates who made him feel bad and humiliated and her teacher did not know how to overcome with that situation. This parent felt neglected and blamed the teacher for not knowing how overcome with the created situation. She emphasized that is hard when the school staff believes that parents and their children with special needs are responsible for any problem caused in the schools' environments.

- Do you think that the educational assistance being provided to your child is effective?

Regarding that question, some of the parents responded that the educational assistance provided to their children was effective. Some of them mentioned that their children made a great progress in education in general, even though there were usual ups and downs for these children. A part of respondents claimed that this assistance is somehow helpful and effective, while there were also a number of parents who did not consider the educational assistance effective for their children, maybe because the teacher did not implementing effective teaching or behavioral management practices.

- What kind of struggles does your child has experienced at school because of his/her disability?

Asked for the struggles their children experience at schools because of their disabilities, a list of barriers and challenges were mentioned by these parents. One parent mentioned that her daughter has experienced struggles to understand, participate and learn equally with other children. She also mentioned that her child has experienced social isolation because she had problems to make friends. Another one mentioned the inferior treatment by other peers. Difficulties in socialization with classmates and inability to participate in the class equally, were other struggles mentioned by some of the parents. One claimed that his child had some struggles at school because the other kids were not friendly to him. While one of the respondents stated that in the beginning her child had difficulties to adopt with new society, and was very selective with the others, now it's good but sometimes gets very nervous when she can't do things properly.

- What educator strategies were most helpful to you in helping your child?

Varieties of answers were conducted regarding that question. Special attention and time provided individually was a strategy applied by an English teacher. Some of the parents mentioned different games and activities within classroom which helped their children be more active. Extra sheets of paper prepared with exercises appropriate for these child which were helpful in improving their learning skills, were some other strategies and methods used by English teachers of these students with special needs, mentioned by their parents. Some parents evaluated higher the group work, which was very effective toward their children.

Interaction and collaboration made them show their creativity in different tasks and enjoy the English classes a lot. Painting was another strategy mentioned by a parent. Based on parents' responses, most of the strategies that educators used with these children have been very helpful. One mentioned that her child now has learned to listen carefully when someone is speaking and now he pays more attention to the details.

- What has the educator done to establish and maintain collaboration with you during the teaching/learning process?

Collaboration between parents and teachers is the key of the success for most of the students. As much as they can keep in touch with each other, the success of the children is guaranteed. Parents gave different answers regarding the collaboration between them and the teachers. A majority of respondents stated that teachers always keep them informed about their children behaviors and progress. One parent claimed that the English teacher of his child always keeps him informed for everything. Also, every day she advises and gives him instructions on how to help his child for homework. However, he stated that she also informs her for any difficulty that his child may encounter during homework. Another parent said that the educator takes always care to keep in touch with her, regarding all the new things her child has learned. Some of them answered that meeting with parents and explaining what the children should or shouldn't do is the key element for their children's progress. But there were also a parent who complained for the collaboration between him and the English teacher of his child. He stated that between them does not exists a proper collaboration because of some painful and humiliating experiences that happened between them. Another complaint comes from another parent, when he mentions cases when the teacher put always the fault to her child with special needs regarding her progress.

- How does your child get along with his/her friends?

Collaboration between peers is a very good step for children's behaviors. Knowing the situation in many schools in Kosovo, students with special needs are many times neglected and refused from their peers and society in general. This is a very worrying issue for many educators and parents, since they experience a lot of challenges and struggles through their daily routines. Asked for the relationship between their children and their classmates, most of the parents seemed to be a concerned from the other children's behaviors. Majority of them answered that their children get along very well only with some of their peers, but some of their classmates mistreat and bully them. Not all of them show any effort to be kind with

these children and be careful how they speak or act. They mentioned many cases when their children did not want to go to school because of their classmates. One parent said that at the beginning, it was difficult for her child to associate with other children. However, over time, she did not have any problem since everyone was so friendly. But, there were satisfied parents also, when they stated that their children get along very well with their friends.

- How does your child get along with his/her teachers?

The way we as teachers interact with our students has a great impact on them. They need our commitment, time and attention. Asked about the relationship between their children and their teachers, many of the respondents mentioned a very special relationship between them. One respondent answered that her child has created a very special relationship with the teacher and that makes her very happy. Another parent stated that her daughter loves her teacher and she is the only reason she accepted to attend school. Some respondent mentioned also that these teachers try to do their best. Even though, their children sometimes do not show good results, they do not blame teachers because they consider very hard to deal with their children and find a solution in some cases. A parent also stated that the teacher's behavior towards his child was adequate which enabled the establishment of a good relationship between these two. Minorities of parents consider their children's teachers as tired of the process and not willing to look at what their children need and want.

- What is the role of the teacher for your child?

The role of the teacher is evident in every environment, especially in those specific cases. Parents of students with special needs were asked about the role of the teacher regarding their children. One respondent claimed that the role of the teacher is very important but if they offer an appropriate education for their children and not the same curriculum as with other children. Many of them considered teachers as helpers and instructors. One mentioned that the teacher has a role of a guide, educator and parent when needed. Teachers had a very important place in children's lives. One parent stated that when her son enjoys the learning process, teacher's role is very important and valuable, but when not, my child does not want to go to school and is not enthusiastic at all. Parents state that teachers motivate students, and their behaviors and their mood depends from their teachers. Based on their answers is clearly seen that teachers play a crucial role in the children's education and participation.

- How much have the teacher helped your children acquire good results?

Asked if their children achieved progress in acquiring good results, many of the respondents claimed that teachers helped their children a lot in achieving very good results in learning. One parent stated that the teacher facilitated her child's development and education by planning activities and lesson based on the child's interest, asking questions to further understanding, and actively engaging in the activities. Whereas there also some complaints regarding the teachers' commitment. One parent said that his child's teacher has failed to acquire good results because she didn't offer the individual help that his child needed. Whereas another respondents stated that from the beginning until now her son has had some progress but not as she thought it would have. Maybe because there are many students in the classroom, so the time is limited to pay special attention to each one individually.

- How well does your child learn things following instruction given to him/her with visual tools?

Parents considered the usage of visual tools at schools very helpful to their children. It did pretty well in learning instruction given with visual tools when majority of children mentioned good results from their children. My child is not very addicted to technology, and does not like working a lot with it. My child enjoys more when they have activities to express themselves without introductions. Some of them mentioned that technology tools developed their children's language skills and helped them improve their language level. Most of them consider it as a great strategy to keep their children's attention on learning and raise their motivation in acquiring. Based on their answers technology is a very helpful tool which facilitated their children's learning. According to the parents' responses, technology is considered as a very attractive and engaging tool for these children, which made their children be more independent and cooperative. They mentioned cases when teachers through technology tools accomplished their objectives by giving different tasks for their children and different ones for other students, without being noticed. Many of the parents who were part of my interview considered technology implementation as a mitigating tool for the teachers, especially in the inclusive classrooms.

Based on the answers of the respondents it comes out that the role of the teacher in the classroom is very important for students with special needs and technology allows teachers to easily differentiate, since it offers different opportunities to make up lessons and to divide the tasks for every student. While the rest of the class is preparing a Power point presentation, a teacher can individually work with students who need more attention. It is obvious that if the

teacher wants to work with these students, even though there are many challenges and difficulties through the way, it can easily differentiate their students without too much noise.

The results and discussion from the observation with students with special needs

Contemporary methods keep special needs students engaged, interested and motivated

Students with special needs experience difficulties in their process of learning

In order to test these two hypotheses, an observation with 20 students with different disabilities in some different primary schools in Gjilan and in special school “Nene Tereza” in Prizren was done. During one month, I observed 20 students of these schools twice a week. During a week in a close cooperation with their teachers, we had one class using technology tools, and one class using only the book as a source of information. This process was the same until the end of my observation in all the mentioned schools. Out of eight classes I observed students with special needs, who were attending the same schools with regular students (excepting the students in the special school “Nene Tereza” in Prizren), four of their classes were taught with technology tools and four of them were without them. I used materials from the book “Welcome 1” from Elizabeth Gray and Virginia Evans to deal with these students (see Appendix 5). In the last 10 minutes of each class, I did a revision using the work book of the same authors, in order to test the results from the both classes (see Appendix 6).

First class with all these students, who were attending the learning process in different schools, was about numbers. In the first class, I used the book as the source of information to teach the students the numbers. I wrote the numbers in the blackboard, and then students had to repeat after me. Majority of students were not interested in what we were explaining. In classes when autistic students were participating, I noticed that they were dealing with something else while I was talking. After this, students had to fill in some exercises on their books. In the ten minutes of the class students had to fill in one exercise in the workbook, when they had to match numbers with the letters. During the filling, I noticed a lot of uncertainty from them. There were also students who did not want to fill in the exercises.

Second class which was held in the same week was a class with technology. It was again about the numbers. This time I used a YouTube video regarding numbers from 1-10 and after

this I played a song regarding numbers. Immediately, the students' motivation started to increase and their attention was better than in the previous class. Again, in the ten minutes of the class students had to fill in one exercise in the workbook, that time they had some numbers shown in the book and they had to write the numbers through the letters. It was interesting for me that all the students started to fill in the exercise. Of course they had some difficulties during the filling, but with my help and their teachers' help, they managed to fill in the exercise.

Next class, which was the third one for them, was about the clothes. This class was organized as a traditional class, including the book as a source of information. Students were shown some clothes on their book. Their teacher wrote on the blackboard the names of the clothes and we repeated them together several of times. After that, students had to read an exercise on the book including different clothes and they had to translate it. In the ten minutes of the class students had to fill another exercise in the workbook, when they had the names of some clothes but with missing letters and had to fill in the missing letters. Students were not engaged at all in that class. Some of them started to fill in the missing letters, but they did not have the idea what to do and the others were not focused at all.

The fourth class which was held in the same week was a class with technology. It was again about the clothes. This time I used a smart board, where I used a collection of images of various clothes. Their attention was brought in the class and it was obvious that they liked that part very much. They started to repeat together with their peers the clothes that were shown in the smart board. They seemed to be much more motivated than in the previous class. As in other classes, again they had to fill in an exercise in the work book. In the exercise there were some children wearing different clothes, where they had to guess what clothes are them and write down the clothes. That time, they had to collaborate with their peers during the filling. They were very engaged and together with their friends did a very good job.

The following week, which was the fifth class, had to do with the body parts. As usually, they were taught through the book, by filling in the exercises, reading and translating. This class was boring for all the students especially for students with special needs. They refused to fill in the exercise at the end of the class.

Next class was the technology implementation turn. This time I used a YouTube video with the body parts. The video was followed with a song about the particular body parts. Students

were much focused and enjoyed the video very much. Instead of work book, that time I presented the exercise that was created in the form of a quiz through a projector. The students with disabilities helped by their peers, had to complete the quiz. This was the class they liked the most. They were very engaged and cooperated very well with their friends.

The last week of my observation came. The following class had to deal with colors. As usually students were taught through the book, completing different exercises. That time they had to cooperate with their peers in the completing of the tasks. A lot of difficulties occurred in the completion of the exercise given in the last ten minutes, where in most of the schools the ones who completed the exercise were regular students.

The eighth class was the last class of my observation. In the close cooperation with the English teachers, I used an online game, where students had to color different shapes with different colors. Students were very interested and motivated. By the end of the class, students were given a task to write down the colors of some objects that were included on their books. Of course they had many difficulties in completing their task, but with the help of us and their peers they finished the task successfully.

Based on the observation that was done for one month in these different primary schools, it comes out that the use of technology tools and multimedia is very beneficial and effective to learn a second language, in that case English language. It was proved as a motivating and supporting tool in the system of education regarding students with special needs. The challenges and difficulties that students with different disabilities experience in the process of learning are evident, but we as teachers and their parents as well, should try to do the best for these students. The implementation of contemporary methods and strategies, in that case of technology tools and multimedia seemed to be necessary and very helpful in teaching these students. Technology tools helped a lot in facilitating teaching process and differentiating students with special needs who attend the same classes with other students.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore if the use of the technology helps students with disabilities learn English better, with a case study in some primary schools in Kosovo. It further intended to explore how do teachers use the technology to facilitate their students' learning and what other methods teachers use in teaching English to the students with special needs. The research attempted to show if teachers try to go through the same process with all students without letting these students feel uncomfortable. It also attempted to find out if the use of the technology is effective and facilitates the learning process regarding students with special needs comparing to the traditional methods which are usually used in primary schools and find out the difficulties that teachers face while working with these students. In order to find out if the use of technology is effective and beneficial in learning English for students with special needs a questionnaire was conducted with 22 English teachers in some of the primary schools in Kosovo, then an interview was held with 20 parents of students with special needs about the role of the teacher for students with special needs and an observation was done with 20 students with different disabilities to find out if the use of technological tools keeps them engaged and motivated and if they experience difficulties in the process of learning. Results showed that the majority of students in these schools are students with autism, hearing impairments and down syndrome, followed by students with the intelligence lower than others and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder).

This study had five hypotheses. The first hypothesis was proven based on the teachers' responses from the questionnaires, since the use of technology to teach English to the students with special needs is considered effective and beneficial for these students. Based on the students' observation, the second hypothesis was also proven since it was found out that contemporary methods keep special needs students engaged, interested and motivated. During my observation students showed more interest and engagement during classes with technology compared with traditional classes. In general, most of the teachers use different contemporary methods in that case technology tools and multimedia during their classes to motivate and engage their students. The third hypothesis which was about challenges and barriers that the English teachers who work with students with different disabilities face was also proven. Based on the data collected on the questionnaire of eighteen questions from twenty two teachers, from primary schools, "Thimi Mitko", "Selami Hallaçi", "Abaz Ajeti",

Dëshmorët e Kombit”, “Rexhep Elmazi” in Gjilan and “Nënë Tereza” in Prizren, it was found that these teachers confront with numerous barriers and challenges throughout their teaching experience, because of the special treatment these students seek. They mentioned some of the barriers and challenges they face with each of the following group in their daily practice and the way they attempt to overcome these barriers. Teachers need more time and activities to achieve their objectives. It gets even harder for these teachers when they see their students with special needs experiencing difficulties most of the time during their learning process. The fourth hypothesis which was about students difficulties in the process of learning was proved during the students’ observation. I encountered that they had many difficulties in completing their tasks and the challenges and difficulties that students with different disabilities experience in the process of learning were evident. The last hypothesis which was about the role of the teachers in the classroom with students with disabilities was proved through the interview of twenty parents of twenty students with disabilities. Based on their responses, it comes out that teachers play a crucial role regarding students with disabilities and help them a lot to manage difficult situations.

This research may be estimated as a successful one, because from this research thesis I achieved to find out the different kinds of problems and challenges that these teachers mostly deal with, and the way they attend to overcome these barriers. Also I understood the influence of them in helping special needs students in English language acquisition.

To conclude based on my research and based on many researchers’ opinions, it comes out that the technology facilitated a lot teaching and learning, especially when dealing with students with special needs. It was proved that technological tools enable students in a better engage and motivation, through different sources and applications. It allows a better communication between peers and created a better relationship between students and teachers. As a result, the application of technology tools increases students with special needs’ motivation, communication, engagement and confidence.

Recommendations

In relation to the analyzed data and on the basis of findings, the following recommendations are made for all the teachers of the primary schools in Kosova and for the random people also, who deal with students with special needs in their everyday life. These children are aware of their special needs and because of it they are afraid of others' opinions, words and actions. Everything what we as people should do, is help each other as much as we can. We can decide if that time spent together will be quality time, time well spent. Above all, we all are humans and should not consider anyone as different. Since I encountered many students bullying and neglecting their peers with different disabilities during my observation, a recommendation would be for all parents to educate their children at home to not see their peers in different light. Children should be educated to help people who need help and treat their peers with different disabilities equally and in a better way.

Another recommendation for all the English teachers who work with children with different disabilities is to try to understand and help them as much as they can. Different strategies and different methods depending on their needs should be applied toward them. The use of technological tools and multimedia help these children achieve better results, engage and participate better.

I would also recommend competent people and curricula developers to work more, examine and explore these students' needs at school, regarding school materials and integration of contemporary methods, since the current materials do not suit as such.

I would recommend to the Ministry of Education in Kosovo as well, to take a better care for the students with special needs, to offer the proper conditions in the schools they attend their learning process and to engage special teachers or psychologists for each student with special needs because they really need it.

Lastly, I would recommend to the society to be more careful regarding these students, and to their parents to not hesitate to affirm and integrate their children. These children should not be victims of society and people who lack respect.

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APENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is compiled for research purposes and it is to be filled by the English teachers of the Primary Schools in Gjilan and the English teachers of the special school in Prizren, as a part of my Diploma Thesis (at South East European University, English Language Department). The aim of this questionnaire is to search for and find out the effectiveness of using technology on learning English of students with disabilities and will take about 10 minutes of your time. The information will be confidential and will not be misused.

Gender (Put X) M ☐ F ☐

Workplace _____

1. Does your class include students with the following needs? (Circle)

- a. Autism
- b. Hearing Impairments
- c. Down-Syndrome
- d. Other (Specify)_____

2. What classes do you have? (Circle)

- a. Traditional classes
- b. Modern classes
- c. Both of them

3. Do you follow a pre-arranged plan with your special needs students? (Circle)

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

4. How do students with special needs learn? (Circle)

- a. Individually
- b. In pairs
- c. In groups

5. Do students with special needs cooperate with other classmates? (Circle)

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

6. How do students with special needs prefer to learn English? (Circle)

- a. In traditional classes
- b. In classes when contemporary methods are used

7. What methods do you use to keep your students with special needs engaged?

(Specify) _____

8. Do you think that using technology tools or multimedia help your students with special needs acquire English Language better than in traditional classes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

9. Do you use any visual tools to help stimulate ideas of students with special needs and their inclusion in the learning process? (Circle)

- a. Always (Why?) _____
- b. Sometimes (Why?)_____
- c. Never (Why?)_____

(If not, skip question number 10).

10. If yes, what technological tools do you specifically use to teach English to your students with disabilities?

(Specify)_____

11. How do your students respond toward classes with technology tools? Do they like the environment?

(Specify)_____

12. Do you use the same methods with all your students? (Circle)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. The methods vary depending on the students' disability

13. Have you achieved satisfying results with the methods you are currently using with students with special needs? (Circle)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Somehow

14. Do you use any game or activity in order to make the English class more attractive? (Circle)

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

(If not, skip question number 15).

15. If yes, what are they?

(Specify)_____

16. How much have students with special needs managed to learn English? (Circle)

- a. Very much
- b. Somehow
- c. Not at all

17. Do you always achieve your objectives during your class? (Circle)

- a. Always (Why?) _____
- b. Sometimes (Why?) _____
- c. Never (Why?) _____

18. Please state any barrier or challenge that you experience when including each of the following group in your daily practice and how do you attempt to overcome?

(Specify) _____

APENDIX 2

PYETËSOR

Ky është një pyetësor që është përpiluar për një studim dhe do të plotësohet nga mësime dhënësit e gjuhës angleze nga shkollat fillore në Gjilan dhe mësime dhënësit e gjuhës angleze nga shkolla e veçanta në Prizren, si pjesë e Punimit tim të Diplomës (Universiteti i Evropës Juglindore-Departamenti i Gjuhës Angleze). Qëllimi i këtij pyetësori është që të hulumtojë dhe të zbulojë efektshmërinë e përdorimit të teknologjisë në të mësuarit e gjuhës angleze nga nxënësit me nevojë të veçanta. Ky pyetësor do të ju marrë përafërsisht 10 minuta. Këto të dhëna do të mbeten sekrete dhe nuk do të keqpërdoren.

Gjinia (Vendosni X) ☐ M ☐ F

Vendi i punës _____

1. A përfshin klasa juaj nxënës me nevojë si në vijim? (Rrethoni)

- a. Nxënës me autizëm
- b. Nxënës me dëgjim të dëmtuar
- c. Nxënës me Sindromën Daun
- d. Nxënës me ndonjë nevojë tjetër të veçantë (Specifikoni) _____

2. Çfarë ore mësimore keni? (Rrethoni)

- a. Orë tradicionale
- b. Orë moderne
- c. Të dyja

3. A ndjekni ndonjë plan të paracaktuar (plan program)? (Rrethoni)

- a. Gjithmonë

- b. Ndonjëherë
- c. Asnjëherë

4. Si punojnë nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta? (Rrethoni)

- a. Në mënyrë individuale
- b. Në dyshe
- c. Në grupe

5. A bashkëpunojnë nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta me nxënësit e tjerë? (Rrethoni)

- a. Gjithmonë
- b. Ndonjëherë
- c. Asnjëherë

6. Si preferojnë të mësojnë gjuhën angleze nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta? (Rrethoni)

- a. Në klasa tradicionale
- b. Në klasa ku aplikohen metodat bashkëkohore

7. Çfarë metoda përdorni për t'i mbajtur nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta të angazhuar?

(Specifikoni) _____

8. A mendoni që përodrimi i paisjeve teknologjike dhe multimedias i ndihmon nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta të mësojnë gjuhën angleze më mire se në klasët tradicionale? (Rrethoni)

- a. Po
- b. Jo
- c. Ndonjëherë

9. A përdorni mjete vizuale për të ndihmuar nxitjen e ideve të nxënësve me nevoja të veçanta dhe përfshirjen e tyre në procesin e të nxënësve? (Rrethoni)

a. Gjithmonë (Pse?) _____

b. Ndonjëherë (Pse?) _____

c. Asnjëherë (Pse?) _____

(Nëse jo, kaloni te pyetja 11).

10. Nëse po, çfarë paisje teknologjike përdorni saktësisht për të mësuar gjuhën angleze nxënësve me nevoja të veçanta?

(Specifikoni) _____

11. Si reagojnë nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta kur përdorni paisje teknologjike në orën tuaj mësimore? A ju pëlqen ora me teknologji?

Specifikoni _____

12. A i përdorni të njëjtat metoda me të gjithë nxënësit tuaj? (Rrethoni)

a. Po

b. Jo

c. Metodat ndryshojnë varësisht nga paaftësia e nxënësit

13. A keni arritur rezultate të kënaqshme me metodat që i përdorni aktualisht me nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta? (Rrethoni)

- a. Po
- b. Jo
- c. Deri diku

14. A përdorni ndonjë lojë ose aktivitet në mënyrë që ora e gjuhës angleze të bëhet më atraktive? (Rrethoni)

- a. Gjithmonë
- b. Ndonjëherë
- c. Asnjëherë

(Nëse jo, kaloni te pyetja 16).

15. Nëse po, cilat janë ato?

(Specifikoni)_____

16. Sa kanë arritur nxënësit me nevoja të veçanta të mësojnë gjuhën angleze? (Rrethoni)

- a. Shumë
- b. Pak
- c. Aspak

17. A mund ti realizoni çdo herë objektivat e orës mësimore? (Rrethoni)

a. Gjithmonë (Pse?) _____

b. Ndonjëherë (Pse?) _____

c. Asnjëherë (Pse?) _____

18. Ju lutemi përmendeni ndonjë pengesë ose sfidë me të cilën përballeni kur përfshini secilin nga grupet në vijim në praktikën tuaj të përditshme dhe si i tejkaloni këto pengesa dhe sfida?

(Specifikoni) _____

Appendix 3

Interview Questions

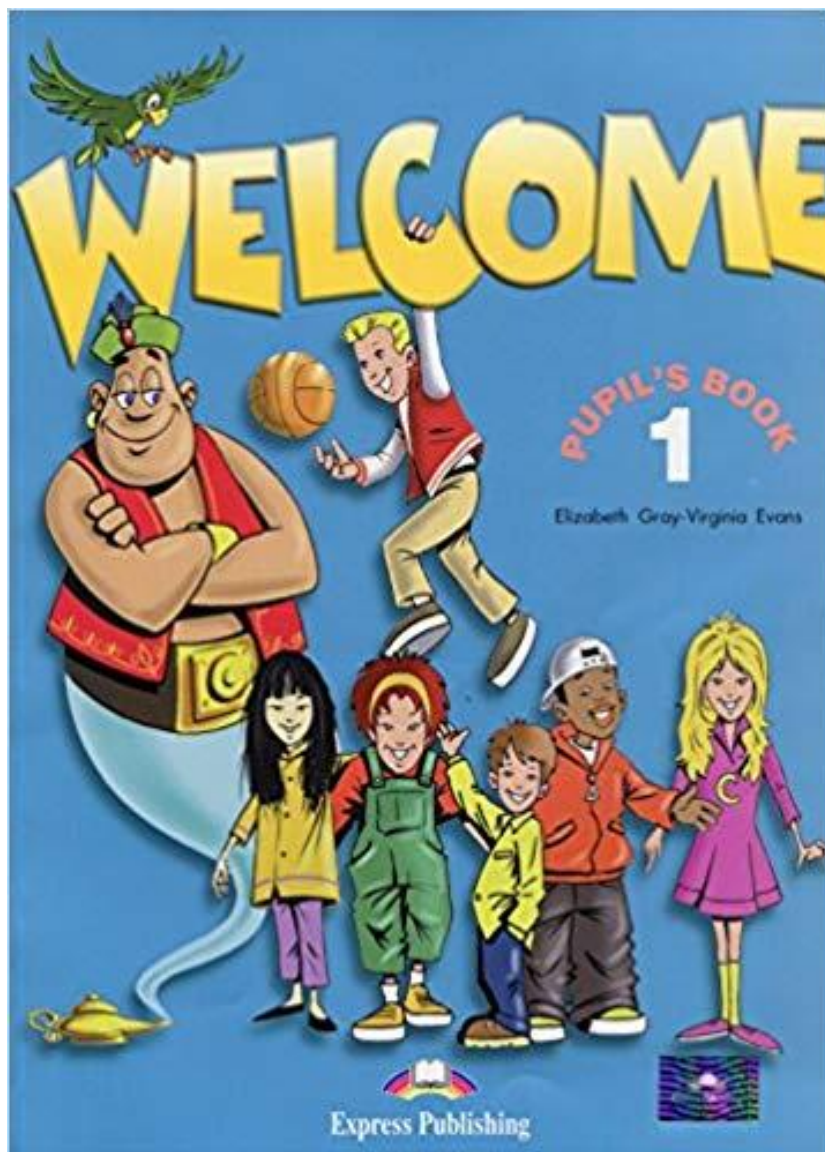
- Are you satisfied with the teachers at the school where your child attends the learning process?
- Did you have any problematic issue with any educator of your child?
- Do you think that the educational assistance being provided to your child is effective?
- What kind of struggles does your child has experienced at school because of his/her disability?
- What educator strategies were most helpful to you in helping your child?
- What has the educator done to establish and maintain collaboration with you during the teaching/learning process?
- How does your child get along with his/her friends?
- How does your child get along with his/her teachers?
- What is the role of the teacher for your child?
- How much have the teacher helped your children acquire good results?
- How well does your child learn things following instruction given to him/her with visual tools?

Appendix 4

Pyetjet e Intervistës

- A jeni të kënaqur me mësimdhënësit e shkollës ku mëson fëmija juaj?
- A keni pasur ndonjëherë ndonjë problem me ndonjë mësimdhënëës të fëmijës tuaj?
- A mendoni se ofrimi i asistencës educative është efektive tek fëmija juaj?
- Çfarë pengesa ka hasur fëmija juaj në shkollë për shkak të paaftësisë së tij?
- Cilat strategji të përdorura nga mësimdhënësit e tij/saj kanë qenë më të dobishme për fëmijën tuaj?
- Çfarë hapa ka ndërmarrë mësimdhënësi i fëmijës tuaj për të krijuar dhe ruajtur bashkëpunimin me ju gjatë procesit mësimor?
- Si janë raportet e fëmijës suaj me shokët e klasës?
- Si janë raportet e fëmijës suaj me mësimdhënësit e tij/saj?
- Cili është roli i mësimdhënësit për fëmijën tuaj?
- Sa i ka ndihmuar mësimdhënësi i tij/saj fëmijës suaj për të arritur rezultate të mira?
- Sa arrin fëmija juaj të mësojë nga përdorimi i paisjeve teknologjike?

Appendix 5



Appendix 6

