

Differentiated teaching in primary school

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Abstract

The problem of individual differences between students, in terms of acquiring knowledge capabilities and learning pace is increasingly attracting the attention of psychologists and teachers today. As the development of this process, there appear differences both between pupils and difficulties to develop a system which matches requirements of each school. Increasingly often, traditional school is criticized for the fact that ignoring the diversity of the individual uniqueness and the personality uniqueness, flattens and standardizes young people's training. So, it is necessary to find suitable means to help all students acquire adequate knowledge in order to develop their personality as fully as possible.

Key words: *differentiated teaching, diversity, personality, training*

The problem of individual differences between students, in terms of acquiring knowledge capabilities and learning pace is increasingly attracting the attention of psychologists and teachers today. As the development of this process, there appear differences both between pupils and difficulties to develop a system which matches requirements of each school. Increasingly often, traditional school is criticized for the fact that ignoring the diversity of the individual uniqueness and the personality uniqueness, flattens and standardizes

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young people's training. So, it is necessary to find suitable means to help all students acquire adequate knowledge in order to develop their personality as fully as possible.

One of the main concerns of pedagogy has been and is the differentiated treatment of students, a problem that requires psychological studies (knowledge of the students psychic capacities and capabilities), biological (related to the peculiarities of individual physical development and hereditary) and sociological (peculiarities of socio-cultural environment from which students come from, human relations).

Differentiation in learning consists in eliminating the gaps in knowledge and skills of students and achieving minimum acceptable performance, but also enrich and deepen students' knowledge capable of superior performance. Differential treatment of students during lessons at school helps teachers to find methods and optimal intervention procedures, to prevent and stimulate the students and contribute to better adjustment of the educational content and curricula to the needs of those who are involved in the educational process.

The issue of differential treatment must take into account a broad category of actions and factors from school and extracurricular, which together may lead to an effective educational activity.

Management and organization of the educational process, in anticipation of differentiated training is a necessity of the educational process today. Differentiated training aims at adapting the learning activity, particularly in terms of content, of forms of organization and methodology, of students' various opportunities, their ability to understand and work pace of groups of students or individual student.

Starting from this premise one can say that differentiation regards the process of consideration of individual features or types of individuals by adapting teaching activities to them. At the same time, training diversification involves establishing several training profiles or training directions and

consequently guidance to those students who best suits them and can get maximum efficiency.

Other authors distinguish between internal differentiation, which refers to the adoption of working methods, means of education in general, the organization and conduct of the teaching activity, to help students obtain a school performance as high as possible and external differentiation, based on the skills of the students that aim their educational and vocational orientation.

Differentiated training involves respecting individual characteristics of the child "because, through education and training, each individual can be transformed into a human personality capable of creating material and spiritual values", while diversification means adapting education to other pedagogical realities with a more broadly aspect than individual [5, p.23]. The adaptation of the training and education process is needed on multiple reasons: the psycho-pedagogical, on the psycho-physical characteristics of students and didactical or school organization or even social.

From the many factors that lead to the need for a nuanced teaching activity, those who have stand out, were the differences between students of the same age undergoing a complex process of training. They regard the psychological dimension of the human personality, which is distinguished by a summary of dispositions, biological tendencies, innate inclinations on one hand and qualities formed during the life and work on the other side. Individual differences are a reality and their nature and degree of development are often easy to notice, so that "we will never find ourselves in front of man in general, but always before a particular man, an individual who is often an enigma, a problem whose solution can only be found in it [5, p.23].

Thus, for the adaptation of the training process to the students' possibilities is necessary to identify the student's learning ability, even from the beginning of school, intellectual deceleration in all its manifestations and assessing the degree of maturity of students in each of these. Any training action must always start from sensing common traits, but also the differences between subjects,

differences that manifest on several levels: intellectual development, learning ability, work pace, interest and inclination, etc.

Detection and deceleration of the characteristics that differentiate the students, the role of each of them in defining their behavior that leads to the expected performance is a prerequisite for any action of differential treatment of students.

In a process of differentiated training, it can operate a selection of contents in accordance with the student's interests and level of ability to learn. At the same time, through a differentiated training, a selection is done both in the volume and complexity of knowledge, as well as in the methods of learning.

Differentiation of education in the individual opportunities as a way to support student in their learning activity is carried out especially in that part of the lesson that establishes the fixation, deepening and implementation of knowledge. This practice is justified in beginner classes, where students are only introduced in science and where the predominant concern is to form basic skills for the intellectual work (reading, writing, calculus), parallel to the theoretical understanding of the fundamentals in information technology.

Education strategy leads to a wide range of forms of work and ways of organizing the training activity. A modern lesson, lively, can be built by the differentiated contest of students: questions addressed to students, tasks regarding work in group or independent work (on notebooks, on worksheets, on the blackboard), tasks given in practical activities.

The different levels of intellectual demands (reproductive, recognition, functionality- integration, transfer, reporting, evaluation, creation) materializes in the tasks that the teacher assigns to students during lessons and outside and shall be graded according to the abilities of each student.

Applied study

A. Hypothesis:

• Differentiated treatment will help improve educational outcomes. If there are drawn differentiated tasks within the activities of independent work, will increase students' performance in the educational process?

B. Research objectives:

- Identifying the role of differentiated worksheets in school performance.
- Tracking the progress of students in independent and differentiated activities.
- Elimination of gaps in students' knowledge and less gifted.
- Identification of the role of the differentiated worksheets in obtaining school performance, and monitoring progress of students in independent and differentiated activity and improving students' efficiency.

C. Area and research methodology:

The research was conducted on experimental method: the experimental sample - 4th grade, "Mozaceniei Vale" Secondary School, consisting of 14 students (8 boys and 6 girls) and control sample - 4th grade "Barla" Secondary School, Arges County, consisting of 17 students (12 boys and 5 girls).

To achieve the research objectives and check the working hypothesis, we gave to the two experimental groups a pre-test (initial assessment) and a post-test (final evaluation) in Romanian language and literature. Between the two assessments have been applied to the experimental group from the "Mozaceniei Vale" Secondary School the differentiated worksheets.

D. Interpretation of results

The two experimental groups have been applied the initial assessment test to identify the level of the knowledge until they are handed lessons, in which were used differentiated worksheets (Fig. No. 1 and Fig. No. 2)

Initial assessment identifies with the initial procurement of the students in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities in order to ensure the prerequisites for

achieving goals for the next stage. This type of evaluation is performed at the beginning of a training program.

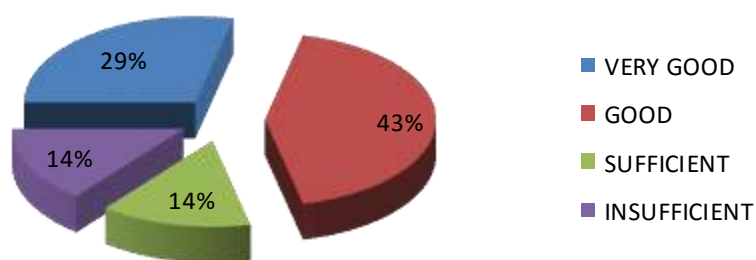


Fig. no. 1 The results from the initial test of the experimental sample

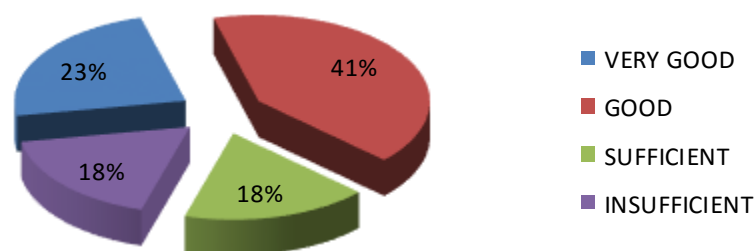


Fig. no. 2 The results from the initial test of the control sample

After using differentiated worksheets, we applied to the subjects of the two experimental groups the final assessment test to determine how students have achieved goals (finding the progress made by students from the differentiated activity and highlighting the correlation between differentiated worksheets and performance - Figure. no. 3 and Fig. no. 4).

The final evaluation determines the extent to which the general proposed aims have been achieved or acquisition of a skill or ability, comparing the students between them or comparing the performance exhibited by each with the expected performance.

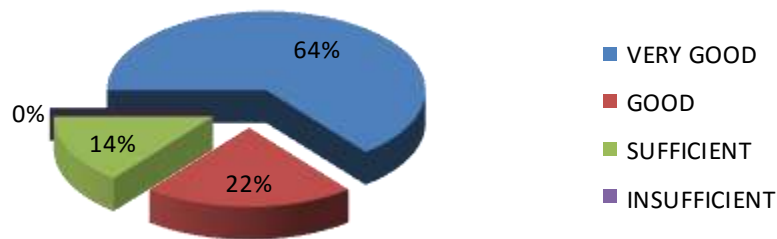


Fig. no. 3 The results obtained at the final test by the of the experimental sample

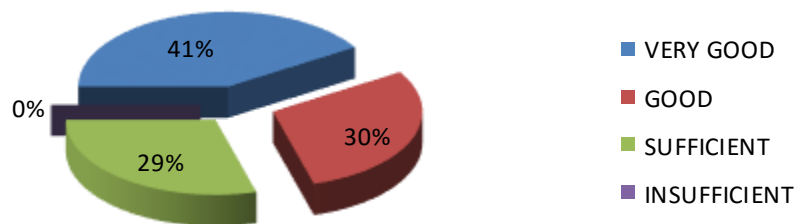


Fig. no. 4 The results obtained at the final test by the control sample

In order to establish the truthfulness of the working hypothesis, we made a comparison between the results obtained by the two experimental groups at initial assessment (before using differentiated worksheets) and the final evaluation results (after applying differentiated worksheets).

Following the initial assessment in Romanian language, one can say that the level of knowledge of the subjects of the two experimental groups is approximately equal.

Following the final assessment in Romanian language the results obtained by the subjects of the two experimental groups are highlighted below (Fig. no. 5, Fig. no. 6).

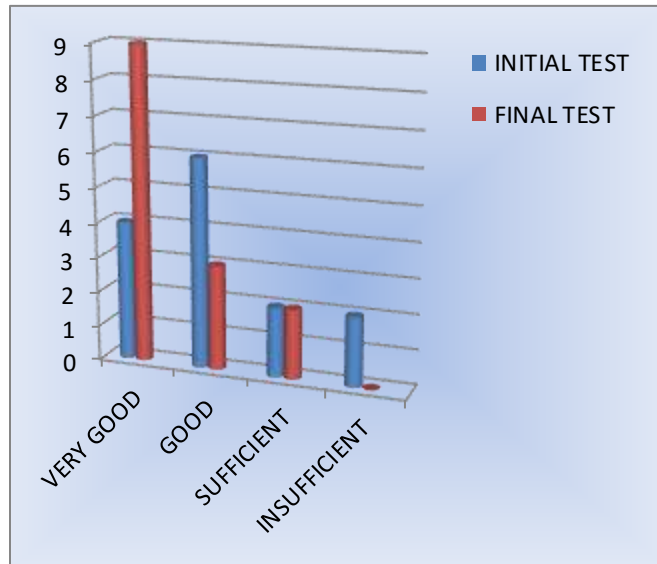


Fig. no. 5 Comparative chart of the results of the experimental sample

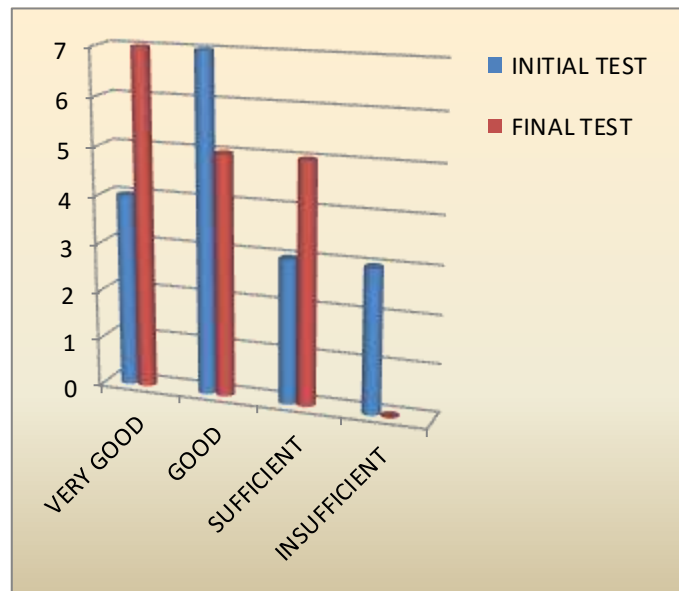


Fig. no. 6 Comparative chart of the results of the control sample

Comparative analysis of graphical representations of the results of the experimental groups to the initial test and the final test shows that the school results have improved considerably.

As this progress is the result of applying differentiated worksheets, we can say that differentiated training at group level education leads to improved students' performance. In this sense we can conclude that the use of differentiated treatment in classroom activities will ensure long-term school success.

The results confirm the hypothesis in that organization and implementation of differentiated activities with students is absolutely necessary.

Following the studies we can draw some conclusions that should be known and must be taken into account when it considers organization and implementation of differentiated activities with students.

1. Differentiated activity has to include all students. Using appropriate methods and procedures to help those who have difficulty in learning to overcome them and live up to the good ones, and the latter to stimulate them to achieve superior results.

2. In the differentiated treatment of students is necessary to bear in mind that keeping the child under their abilities compared to his intellectual potential is like a overstrain, an obstacle to his development.

3. Relying on scientific understanding of the relationship between development and learning, differential treatment of students must be achieved in a humanistic perspective incompatible with optics, still frequently widespread, that to a intellectual weak student must be given only light loads, the heavier having been inaccessible.

4. The differentiation of activity with the students does not exclude frontal work, but only alters its relative share related with group and individual work.

5. The differentiation of the activity must cross the entire process of education, being introduced at any time during the lesson. It applies both in classroom work and on the outside of the classroom.

6. The content of education is common and compulsory for all students from class, differentiated only by the methods and forms of teaching - learning

it, so that it can be assimilated by each student to an appropriate level of its possibilities.

7. Under differentiated activities will be used methods and procedures in specific combinations of individual characteristics of students, which leads to the greatest intellectual abilities arouse and maintain interest in learning, curiosity, stimulates creative attitude, calls for effort, provides an active and effective learning.

8. Differentiation and working procedures are not to lower the requirements to the weak students, but to get the most from each student.

9. Differentiation of teaching activity does not mean "nannying" each student, but increase independent work to put it in a position to find oneself in solving tasks proposed to them.

10. Academic activity, under its structural aspect (human and material resources, content, environment, time) and operational aspect (methods, procedures, work techniques) should be a sequence of complex recovery process, whose strategy may not refrain from working with differentiated algorithm according to which the teacher can and should resize the contents with which he operates.

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