



SEN

Toolkit for teachers



MAGIC SENS

MANaging Graduated approach and Including balanced Curriculum for Special Educational Needs Students

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SEN TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS

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SEN Toolkit for Teachers
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INTRODUCTION

MAGIC SENS at a glance

In Europe, about 15 million people have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and, often, they leave school without acquiring a degree or a qualification, before moving on to specific vocational courses. Hence, frequently people with SEN find themselves unemployed or inactive and, even in cases where employment appears to be successful, remain in a condition of disparity with respect to their peers.

This is why the project **MAGIC SENS** - **MA**naging **G**raduated **A**pproach and **I**ncluding balanced **C**urriculum for SEN Students, co-funded under **ERASMUS+** - KA2 Strategic Partnership for School Education, aims to improve the skills and competences of teachers and of all those who work in the education sector, with reference to **teaching for students with SEN**.

MAGIC SENS will establish a stable network among the various actors involved in the educational chain in 4 European countries – Romania, Ireland, Italy, Greece – and to develop a toolkit, an exchange and sharing platform and a training course, all aimed at supporting and improving teaching for SEN for **primary and secondary school teachers**.

The projects expects to allow the acquisition of specific skills by teachers to intervene with innovative approaches and tools in reference to different SEN, the strengthening of tools for **preventing failure and dropping out of students with SEN**, the increase in the percentage of students with SEN within universities and the implementation of strategies aimed at their entry into the labour market, which take into account their individual attitudes, potential, abilities and talents.

MAGIC SENS is the result of the cooperation between FSLI, nationally representative trade union organization in the field of education in Romania, the Italian training provider FORMA.Azione, Dyslexia Association of Ireland, the Romanian parents' association Asociația București Pentru Copii Dislexici, SEV Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, the Greek research and consultancy company C.M. Skoulidi & Sia E.E., and CENTRO F.A.R.E. from Italy, a centre for in-depth diagnostic and support addressed to persons with Special Educational Needs.

Defining Special Educational Needs

According to the policy brief “**Support for children with special educational needs (SEN)**” developed by RAND Europe for the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, “despite the universally accepted importance of supporting children with SEN, there is no common agreement in Europe of what constitutes special needs in education”. The use of a commonly agreed definition across the EU is hindered on one hand by the absence of a harmonised system of classification for individual learning difficulties, on the other hand by the differences across Europe in the labels used to categorise children with SEN, and the underpinned social understandings.

Anyway, most definitions include a broad spectrum of conditions related to physical, mental, cognitive and educational impairments. Among these, the *Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education* and training (NESSE) makes a distinction between **normative and non-normative difficulties**: physical and sensory difficulties are considered to fall in **normative category**, where broad agreement on what constitutes normal functioning and objective assessment measures are available; **non-normative difficulties** are intended as the type of difficulties where there is less agreement about normal functioning and where professional views plays a relevant part in identification, such as learning difficulties including dyslexia.

For the purpose of this project, we consider focusing on specific SEN - special educational needs, the **non-normative difficulties** and specifically those one that can be approached directly by teachers, with appropriate training and tools:

- **dyslexia** (reading disorder);
- **dysgraphia** and **dysorthography** (writing disorder);
- **dyscalculia** (calculation disorder).

Approach and methodology

The *Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching* (2018/C 195/01) commits European States in promoting inclusive education by “providing the necessary support to all learners according to their particular needs, including those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, those from a migrant background, those with special needs and the most talented learners”. At the same time, the Recommendation highlights the need for enabling educational staff to promote common values and deliver inclusive education, by “promoting initial and continued education, exchanges and peer learning [...] for educational staff”.

Considering the Recommendation, the MAGIC SENS project is aimed to provide teachers and all those subjects who, as a profession, carry out teaching and training activities, with innovative tools and methodologies for teaching subjects to SEN students.

To achieve this goals, we started our work from the setting up of a stable network of subjects that are involved in the educational chain, both at trans-sectoral level (trade unions/ schools/ training institutes) and on the transnational level (the various countries involved); then we planned to develop specific activities and tools addressed to **primary and secondary school teachers** aimed at supporting and improving teaching for Special Educational Needs, and at increasing the awareness of the local communities about the need for cooperation among policy makers, services, schools and training providers towards a more quality and inclusive education for SEN students.

In particular, the activities which made possible the realization of the present Toolkit have been the following:

- **Mapping of practices, methodologies, tools and legislation related to the SEN context in the educational field** - the action aimed at the collection and systematization of different successful approaches and experiences in support of SEN students in Romania, Ireland, Italy, Greece, with specific reference to early identification of children at risk (preschool); formal diagnosis process; early intervention programs; legislation in place for SEN (rights and recognition); accommodation, modification and support in educational place; learning & development opportunities for SEN children outside school.
- **Observation of curricular activities in primary schools**, aimed at collecting evidences of practices and methods adopted by teachers to deal with students with Special Educational Needs. The rationale of this activity is to support the good practices collected and described in the mapping with specific comments coming from the direct observation of the learning/teaching process, in order to also identify potential teachers’ training needs and areas of improvements to be tackled through the MAGICSENS project activities.
- **Focus group with teachers and key educational stakeholders** in order to identify teachers’ training needs according to a national, transnational and trans-sectorial perspective, with specific reference to the area of the school support of young people with SEN

Through these activities, based on a multi-stakeholder approach, we collected and defined in this Toolkit a set of resources and links to support teachers in taking action to **remove barriers to learning** by putting effective SEN provision in place.

The Toolkit will be then valorised as didactic support for the design and the realization of an **online platform** dedicated to teaching tools and methodologies for young people with SEN, and of the reference **training modules**.

Finally, these tools will make possible the design of an **online training course for teachers** and all those subjects that carry out teaching activities for SEN students during the different stages of the educational chain.

The Toolkit

The aim of the Toolkit is to provide **concrete support for teachers** in the project countries by **describing interesting approaches and practices in SEN assessment**, as well as in **planning, implementation and review of didactic measures** for boosting inclusive learning with reference to SEN students.

The Toolkit is also aimed at the **national frameworks for Special Education Needs existing in 4 European countries** – Romania, Greece, Ireland, Italy – so as to allow the different key actors and stakeholders of the educational chain to better plan and develop actions in favour of SEN students.

According to this perspective, the toolkit can be used also as a **model at transnational level** to support and boost teaching competences with reference to SEN; moreover, it is also meant to be a useful tool to better support **mobility programme evaluation** within Europe, specifically with reference to strategies and practices targeting SEN students.

The Toolkit takes inspiration by the *graduated approach* that is a four-part cycle through which actions are reviewed and refined as understanding of a student's needs for support. In fact, teachers continually assess, plan, implement and review their approach to teaching all students and, where a potential special educational need has been identified, this cyclical process should become more tailored.

To guide teachers and with the aim to reach concrete results, the collected practices and reference information have been categorised as follows:

1. Assessment

1a. Early identification of children at risk (preschool) – practices related to formal definition of "children at risk", screening procedure / protocol for educators, training for educators, information available for parents and educators, presence of SEN specialists/department in the educational setting, focused on SLD as non-normative difficulties needing different assessment approaches, depending on cultural, national education system, language etc. **1b. Formal diagnosis process** – practices linked to formal agreed team and procedures/protocols for diagnosis, evidence-based standardized diagnosis tools available to specialists, agreed methodology for assessment and eligibility criteria for SEN with specific reference to SLD, events to disseminate best practices.

1c. Legislation in place for SEN – rights and recognition of SEN, specific law/s and/or regulations in place about SEN and education, formal definition of SEN; specific legislation for SLD.

2. Planning

2a. Early intervention programs – practices about the availability of specialists in the public and private systems, the development and the monitoring of Personal Educational Plan and evidence-based programs.

3. Implementation

3a. Accommodation, modification and support in educational place – practices related to "SEN-friendly" class in the school, in-class support, individual support and teaching assistance; didactic recommendations for teachers in class to adapt their approach for SEN students during learning process; Instruments to help improve learning capacity of SEN students.

3b. Learning & Development opportunities for SEN children (outside school) – after-school programs, homework assistant tools for parents, extracurricular learning events.

4. Review

Guidance, methodologies and tools on tracking students' progresses – practices linked to students' guidance, evaluation indicators and measures, reviewing of didactic objectives and plans.

Practices will be grouped per categories and reference subcategories, including the information collected in each of the project countries.

At the end of the toolkit a specific section will be dedicated to **useful/ necessary skills and competences for teachers/ trainers to better respond to the educational needs of SEN students** and to the expectations of their family/ parents, so as to lay the foundations for the subsequent teachers' training.

How to work with the toolkit

The Toolkit is designed as a practical and flexible tool, which can be adapted to different SEN students' needs.

You can use the toolkit as a source of information on various areas of practice for different situations; you can use practices by adapting them to your educational contexts, combining them or choose a single one.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

You are encouraged to revise each practice to meet your specific needs and, to support it, each document is available in word format. You only need to retain project and funding logos in your personalised versions. You can also use the Toolkit in its published format, in accordance with the Creative Commons regulation.

It is recommended that the practices are implemented together with school staff and, in cooperation with external stakeholders, so as to improve the awareness and the competences of the whole community of practices working for inclusive education.

Ethical issues

Some of the practices in this Toolkit may involve consultation with children and their families as well with staff of social, health and education services so, in replicating or adapting them, you need to be sure to correctly face the ethical aspects related to data protection and individual involvement as well as to potential recorded data and information.

It is necessary to ensure strict compliance of practices' activities and outcomes with already established rules concerning **privacy and data protection**, to ensure genuine informed consent of all those participating in the project, and to ensure that information is only used for its purpose.

The following permissions may be required:

Parental permission to:

- document observations of their child in the setting,
- include their child in photographs,
- include their child in video clips,
- consult with their child,
- use samples of their child's work,
- use examples of the above for websites or Facebook pages.

Children's permission to:

- observe them in the setting,
- include them in photographs,
- include them in video clips,
- consult with them,
- use samples of their work,
- post them on websites or Facebook pages.

Staff permission to:

- observe them in their work,
- include them in photographs,
- include them in video clips,
- consult with them,
- use examples of their work,
- post them on websites or Facebook pages.

It is important that parents, children and staff are clear about what data will be used, how it will be used and where it will be used to ensure informed consent.

chapter 1



Chapter 1
GREECE

GREECE

COUNTRY FACTS

A

According to Law no. 4547/2018 of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece, teachers who observe some particular learning difficulties in students, should refer them and their parents to the to the EDEAY of the school and/or to the Centers for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY Centers). EDEAY (Educational Diagnostic Evaluation and Support Committee) operate in many schools, especially those with Integration Units. The evaluation, the differentiated program and the general support of the child in order to overcome educational or psychosocial barriers in the learning process, is accomplished by this first grade, multidisciplinary committee (Law 4115/2013, FEK 315/2014).

If further support is needed after the implementation of the short term intervention program, EDEAY refers the child to KESY (Law 4547/2018, art.10) Thus, in the process of identifying needs, students who appear to be experiencing persistent learning difficulties, that fall within the categories of special educational needs or other psychosocial type difficulties, are registered, in collaboration with their teachers, EDEAY, and at the request of the parents, to be further evaluated by the KESY Centers. As mentioned in law 4547/2018, The Centers for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY) operate in the headquarters of the Education Directorates, as defined in article 6 of law 4547/2018 and are organic units of the Regional Directorates of Education.

The mission of the KESY Centers in accordance with the provisions of article 7 of law 4547/2018 is to support the schools in ensuring equal access in education for all students and to promote their harmonious psychosocial development and progress. For the fulfilment of their mission, KESY Centers conduct research into educational and psychosocial needs, carry out evaluations, planning and implementation of educational and psychosocial interventions as well as career guidance activities, support the overall work of school units providing information, training and raising awareness of the community.

All the actions of KESY Centers have an educational orientation and aim at multidimensional support of the work of the school units and the entire student population of their area of responsibility.

The responsibilities and the key pillars of operation of KESY Centers are defined in accordance with the provisions of Article 7 of Law 4547/2018 and are related to: the investigation and evaluation of educational and psychosocial needs provision of targeted educational and psychosocial interventions and career guidance actions 28 Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union 2018 – 1- RO01-KA201-049489 support of the school units informing and educate school community raising awareness of the community.

The diagnosis of educational and psychosocial needs for children with SEN according to the case of paragraph 2 of article 7 of Greek law 4547/2018 includes: the process of recording further assessment needs, the process of educational and psychosocial assessment and the issuance of individual assessment, the production of evaluation reports such as social history report, educational and psychological evaluation and other assessments the creation and maintenance of the individual file of each student which have been examined, the exploration of psychosocial support and career guidance requests, at an individual or group level.

KESY Centers are implementing actions to investigate educational and psychosocial needs across the student population of their region, in order to identify possible special educational needs or psychosocial difficulties of students possible structural barriers in learning within the school community for all students. The individual assessment includes the evaluation of students who have special educational needs or students facing other psychosocial difficulties, at individual level, with emphasis to personalized support.

Early identification of children at risk (preschool)

FORMAL DEFINITION OF "CHILDREN AT RISK"

TITLE

Early Identification of Children at Risk in Greece

DESCRIPTION

About 1/3 of pre-school children run the risk of under-performance in education which may lead to school failure. The difficulties are the results of problems present at birth or identified in the early years.

The term "Risk" refers to environmental, social, biological or hereditary factors:

- Environmental - social risk factors: In today's society, many children are in a state of danger, at risk for their future schooling, due to economic and social deprivation, causes linked to poverty and low socio educational level. The mental and emotional development of young children living in such settings is threatened by factors such as family breakdown, inadequate health care, abuse and low quality childcare in general, conditions that increase the likelihood of a child's failure even at the most basic levels of learning.
- Biological - intrinsic risk factors: These include genetic, chromosomal disorders, inherent metabolic abnormalities, biomedical problems such as prematurity, anoxia, injuries, etc. which can lead to developmental problems reaching up to the level of disability.

OBJECTIVES

The early identification of children at risk, aims at offering a positive, supportive framework and implementing intervention programs and special accommodation and thus at eliminating to the highest degree the possibility or the extent of underperformance and school failure. From very early age, in pre-school or early school years, when the written skills of a child have not yet developed, it is likely to recognize some issues in phonological development, in speech and other areas, such as mobility and cognitive development. These issues, depending on the quality, intensity and frequency of occurrence, are likely to lead to studding difficulties in school age or even learning failure. These signs are revealing children who are at risk of learning difficulties.

TARGET GROUPS

The target group is pre-school children who have early signs of difficulties in learning, but often these difficulties are underestimated, (as just signs of immaturity), not identified on time, as early as possible, or the children have no access to special education services, although they need it and would benefit from it.

There are of course children with identified deficiencies (mental, physical, emotional, linguistic) and who receive special education services.

WHEN

During the pre-school education (4 years to 6 years of age)

HOW

Early intervention and accommodation programs in – class for children at risk, with early signs of a degree of difficulty.

LINKS

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education/

<https://slideplayer.gr/slide/5588344/>

<http://eid-scholi-kofon-lef.schools.ac.cy/index.php?id=gkaire-parmbase>

<http://www.esdy.edu.gr/?page=anptyksipaidioykentraenimerosi>

SCREENING PROCEDURE/ PROTOCOL FOR EDUCATORS

TITLE

KESY Centres (Centers of Educational Counselling Support) – EDEAY Interdisciplinary Educational Assessment and Support Committee (Low 4547/2018)

DESCRIPTION

The first assessment takes place from the EDEAY committee at school. If it finds any kind of difficulties its members (special education teacher, psychologist, social worker) form a short-term intervention program. EDEAY (Educational Diagnostic Evaluation and Support Committee) operate in many schools, especially those with Integration Units. The evaluation, the differentiated program and the general support of the child, in order to overcome educational or psychosocial barriers in the learning process, is accomplished by this first grade, multidisciplinary committee (Low 4115/2013, FEK 315/2014). If the student is still facing difficulties, he/she is referred to KESY.

KESYs are diagnostic and support centres of the Greek Ministry of Education, which consist of multidisciplinary teams and have the responsibility to evaluate children from preschool age. The mission of the KESY Centers in accordance with the provisions of law 4547/2018, is to support the schools to ensure equal access in education for all students and to promote their harmonious psychosocial development and progress. For the fulfilment of their mission, KESY Centers conduct research into educational and psychosocial needs, carry out evaluations, planning and implementation of educational and psychosocial interventions as well as career guidance activities, support the overall work of school units providing information, training and raising awareness of the community.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of EDEAY is to identify in- school and with the assistance of the teachers, children at risk or with certain difficulties, intervene directly with a personalized program and monitor the outcomes. KESY centers are responsible for identifying and diagnosing educational or other difficulties and needs of pre-school and school age students, including students with disabilities or with special educational needs (SEN). KESY centers are also responsible for issuing the relevant evaluation report.

TARGET GROUPS

Preschool and school children of public and private schools. The teachers who have SEN students in their classes also get support from EDEAY and KESY.

WHEN

Whenever a teacher recognizes a difficulty, he may ask for the help of EDEAY and if it is necessary the child is referred to KESY. Unfortunately, not all school have EDEAY. If not, then the school or the parent may apply to KESY

HOW

In any case, in order for KESY to assess a child, the parents must apply in the centre and ask for a formal diagnosis from the interdisciplinary personnel of the centre and support in school. KESY always asks first for an educational report from the schoolteacher or teachers.

LINKS

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/keddy-eidiki-ekpaideusi-4/16873-katalogos-ton-kesy-ana-perifereia>

<https://blogs.sch.gr/>

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/symvulia-epitropes/2282-systash-eeday-kathikonta>

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

TITLE

Expertise in Special Education and Training

DESCRIPTION

The specialization in SEN students teaching is provided in Greece from Universities i.e. Ph. D., M.Sc. or 400 hours

training from an educational centre, which cooperates with universities.

KESYs with the cooperation of PEKES, also have responsibility for counselling and supporting schoolteachers in their work with SEN children and to disseminate good practices.

Another very important educational and training public carrier for educators are PEKs of the Ministry of Education. These are Peripheral Education Centers (16 in Greece) which implement short term and long-term educational programs, often in Special Education, for teachers working in public schools.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lifelong training and education is educators to respond to the needs of SEN students, to exploit heterogeneity of the students' population, to promote integration, innovations and good practices (cooperative learning, ICT etc.), to cultivate important skills to students, to offer psychological support and guidance to students and parents, to empower vulnerable groups and to deal with crisis.

TARGET GROUPS

All teachers of all grades who have SEN students in their classes, all special education teacher to renew their knowledge, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists and other special education staff.

WHEN

Training courses are held very often in Greece, especially the 400 hours courses. KESY and the Educational Coordinators (E.C.) also implement seminars and conferences for training and dissemination of SEN practices.

HOW

Postgraduate courses and 400-hour training are offered also online, which makes them easily accessible. The seminars and conferences are offered to school teachers from the KESY and EC of their region and are supported by the Ministry of Education.

LINKS

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/to-thema-eidiki-agwgi>

<https://www.semifind.gr/seminaria/list/Katigories/50/eidiki-agogi>

<https://elearningekpa.gr/categories/eidiki-agogi>

<https://spedu.gr/>

<http://e-epimorfosi.aegean.gr/>

<https://e-employ.gr/el/dia-viou-ekpaideusi>

<https://www.alfavita.gr/seminaria>

<https://www.esos.gr/tags/perifereiaka-epimorfotika-kentra>

INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS (WEBSITE, BROCHURES, LEAFLETS ETC)

TITLE

Official information provider for parents and educators

DESCRIPTION

The Greek Ministry of Education as well as the Pedagogical Institution are the official information providers about the policies and the education of SEN children in the public sector. KESY and PEKES (Regional Centres for Educational Design) which belong to the Ministry of Education are responsible for the dissemination of information about SEN and for counselling parents of children as well as teachers and educators or other professionals and the wider community in this domain.

Moreover, parents' organizations also disseminate information and guidance to parents, online but also through seminars, leaflets, brochures etc.

Private centres for SEN children do offer counselling and support as well. They produce a wide variety of material in order to guide better parents.

Teachers and Special Educational Staff have also formed unions which support their work and inform the Special education community about innovations, practices and other actions.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of all these public and private bodies is to disseminate information and update it whenever necessary, so that all involved in the SEN children education and care. receive the best information. The second objective is providing counselling and guidance through personalized session, seminars, educational events, online material, leaflets and brochures.

TARGET GROUPS

Parents of SEN children, teachers of SEN children, Special Educational Staff, other professionals, the whole community

WHEN

Teachers and parents may refer to one of the KESYs –there are 72 in Greece- whenever they need information or support.

The same holds for the parental organizations.

HOW

Parents need to fill an application form in KESY in which they describe the problem and define their application.

If a school unit needs assistance for a student or any other problem concerning a group students or the teachers, it must apply to the KESY of the region and experts will visit the school unit in order to offer proposals, intervention programs and the appropriate support.

LINKS

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/>

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education_new/index_gr.htm

<https://www.alfavita.gr/eidiki-agogi>

<https://www.mysep.gr/>

<https://www.noesi.gr/>

<https://www.newseae.gr/>

<http://www.especial.gr>

<http://www.specialeducation.gr>

<http://www.poseepea.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.posgamea.gr>

<http://www.esamea.gr>

<http://www.dyslexia-goneis.gr>

<http://www.adhdhellas.org>

SEN SPECIALIST IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

TITLE

SEN Specialists in formal education settings

DESCRIPTION

Teachers and other professionals related to SEN education and with special education. These are pre-school SEN teachers, SEN teachers in primary education settings, SEN teachers in secondary education schools. They all may work in mainstream schools if they have Integration Departments or in Special education schools.

Besides special education teachers together with the Special Educational Staff form the EDEAY of the mainstream school (Interdisciplinary Educational Assessment and Support Committee), which are also providing their services in public educational settings. The Special Educational Staff of EDEAY consists of psychologists, social workers.

KESY also have SEN teachers of all grades, Special Educational staff already mentioned and moreover they have speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists

OBJECTIVES

Besides teaching, SEN teacher also provides guidance and information to parents of SEN students. Teachers, as well as the Special Educational Staff form the short term Personalized Educational Program for the student with difficulties, with the collaboration of the parents (Law 3699/2008).

The interdisciplinary staff of KESY makes the formal assessment and diagnosis of SEN children and advise teachers and parents about best practices, differentiations in the curriculum, the Personalized Educational Program, interventions, special aids and accommodations, guidance and support.

TARGET GROUPS

SEN specialists intervene whenever a student faces difficulty in the learning procedure or in general in the educational setting. Thus, any student facing educational, behavioural, social, adaptive or other difficulties, diagnosed or not, is the target group of SEN specialists.

WHEN

Whenever a teacher or a parent finds out or suspects a students' difficulty, he/she can refer to SEN specialists of the school unit, EDEAY or KESY and ask for support and accommodations.

HOW

The interdisciplinary team of the school unit convene and discuss the difficulty and the intervention or accommodations for the SEN student. Parents may also refer to EDEAY or KESY

LINKS

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/>

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education

<http://www.prosvasimo.gr/EDEAY>

<http://iep.edu.gr/en/>

<http://www.poseepea.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.newseae.gr/>

SEN DEPARTMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

TITLE

Types of school settings for SEN students in the Greek public school

DESCRIPTION

There are 4 types of schools for SEN students in the Greek Educational System:

- a. The mainstream class
- b. The integration department inside the mainstream school where the student supported a few hours per week
- c. The special school setting (SMEAE i.e. School Unit of Special Education and Training)
- d. The parallel support where there are two persons in the classroom, the teacher and the special education teacher who supports the SEN student.

OBJECTIVES

The objective is to provide the best education for SEN students and at the same time to ensure that they are educated in the least restricted environments.

TARGET GROUPS

- a. In the mainstream class attend SEN students with milder difficulties who can respond to the curriculum with the support of the mainstream teacher.
- b. In integration Departments attend students with a formal diagnosis from KESY and with the consensus of parents. Usually they are SEN students with learning difficulties, or other difficulties who need a special setting support and accommodations for a few hours in order to be able to follow the curriculum.
- c. Students with profound difficulties attend Special Schools. They all have formal diagnosis from KESY or Child Medical Centers in Hospitals.
- d. Parallel support is offered only if it is recommended by KESY and it concerns mainly children with autism and ADHD

WHEN

Teachers and/or parents may refer to KESY in order to receive the formal diagnosis which specifies the best setting depending on the students' difficulties. Teachers of mainstream classes may also refer to KESY for supportive material and programs.

HOW

Teachers refer parents to KESY, if they believe that a child has any difficulty but also parents may apply for a KESY diagnosis which defines the appropriate setting.

LINKS

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education/xartografisi/hartographisi-part1.pdf

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/keddy-eidiki-ekpaideusi-4/16873-katalogos-ton-kesy-ana-perifereia>

<https://www.academia.edu>

<http://minedu.gr>

<http://iep.edu.gr/en>

<http://www.specialeducation.gr>

Formal diagnosis process

SEN DIAGNOSIS

TITLE

Who conducts the formal diagnosis of SEN in Greece

DESCRIPTION

The organizations which are responsible for the diagnostic process of SEN in Greece are (Law 4547/2018):

- ▶ KESY Centers: Centers for Educational and Counselling Support
- ▶ EDEAY Committees for the Interdisciplinary Educational Evaluation and Support which operate in schools with Special Education Unit are also responsible for the evaluation and support of the school students. These committees belong to the School Networks for the Educational Support (SDEY). They conduct
- ▶ DEDA: Secondary Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee in cases of disagreement, if a secondary evaluation is needed.
- ▶ Medical Centers (IED) which have been certified by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of Greece
- ▶ Community Centers for the Mental Health of Children and Teenagers, certified by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of Greece

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the formal diagnosis is to specify the special educational needs of the student, to diagnose the cause of his/her difficulties, to define the best and least restrictive educational setting for the SEN student, to form the Personalized Educational Program and to support the student, the teachers, the parents and the whole educational community.

TARGET GROUPS

The target group of all this bodies are students with SEN and their parents

WHEN

Parents may refer to KESY, the Medical Centres or the Community Centres whenever they think that their child faces any kind of difficulties in school. The schools with EDEAY firstly refer to that committee and if it is necessary, they refer the parent to KESY

HOW

They make an application to KESY asking for formal diagnosis and support.

LINKS

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/eidikh-agwgh/874-iatropaidagwgika-kentra-pistopoihshs-eidikwn-ekpaidevtikwn-anagkwn>

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education/xartografisi/hartographisi-part1.pdf

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/keddy-eidiki-ekpaideusi-4/16873-katalogos-ton-kesy-ana-perifereia>

<http://www.nomotelia.gr/photos/File/2289B-19.pdf>

www.opengov.gr/ypaipth

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/iatropaidagogika-kpsy>

FORMAL AGREED PROCEDURES/PROTOCOLS FOR DIAGNOSIS

TITLE

Formal Diagnosis procedures for SEN children

DESCRIPTION

The formal procedure for the SEN diagnosis must be implemented by an interdisciplinary team of experts. A special education teacher, a psychologist and a social worker is the central team for the formal evaluations and diagnostic processes. KESY's though have a variety of experts who contribute to the diagnostic procedure if needed, depending on the special needs of the individual child. These are speech therapist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, expert in orientation of blind people, expert in sign language.

According to the latest law (4547/2018) all the formal diagnosis committees of the Ministry of Education consist at least of these three specialties. These are EDEAY, KESY, DEDA (Secondary Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee).

The Community Centers and the Medical centers do not belong to the Ministry of Education. They too have interdisciplinary teams (child psychiatrist, psychologist etc.), although not always a special education teacher.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the formal procedure is to determine the exact type of the learning difficulty of the child and hence to propose the best accommodations.

The special education teacher estimates the child's readiness for school (if it is a preschool child), phonological awareness, the language skills, oral and written, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, the mathematical skills, reasoning ability.

The psychologist conducts assessments of the intelligence, the level of language, visual skills, decoding, comprehension, rational mathematical thinking, logical deductive reasoning ability, critical thinking, understanding everyday situations, behaviour and emotion, gross motor and fine motor skills, analytical, ability of analysis and synthesis of data, spatial information processes, orientation.

The social worker interviews the parents in order to obtain information concerning the developmental, educational, social history of the child as well as other information about the synthesis of the family and its special characteristics which may affect the child's progress.

Depending on the child's difficulties other specialties also evaluate the child. E.g. if the child shows difficulties in speech, a speech therapist assesses its performance in all levels of language production and comprehension. If a child has motor difficulties, a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist, do their assessment and propose the appropriate accommodations.

TARGET GROUPS

Every student who faces difficulties in the learning procedure, in other words every student of all educational grades and all types of schools facing educational, behavioural, social, adaptive or other difficulties, is the target group of KESY carrying diagnosis procedures. Preschool children are mainly assessed through non-formal tests and detailed observation of behaviour, although there is a standardized preschool test (WPPSI-III) which can be used. School children are assessed by the WISC-III and the ATHINA test, as well as non-formal procedures.

WHEN

These formal procedures are conducted by the interdisciplinary committee of KESY if the child is referred to it by EDEAY. If a school does not have EDEAY, parents may apply directly for a formal diagnosis from KESY.

HOW

EDEAY refers a child to KESY after having implemented a short-term program, which had not the expected results. Then, the formal diagnostic procedure of KESY is conducted. Parents, as already mentioned, have to apply to KESY and state the reason they desire the formal evaluation to be conducted.

LINKS

<http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=3867>

<http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=1959>

<https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-ekpaideuse/koine-upourgike-apophase-211076-gd4-2018.html>

EVIDENCE-BASED STANDARDIZED DIAGNOSIS TOOLS AVAILABLE TO SPECIALISTS

TITLE

Evidence based standardized diagnostic tools available to specialists

DESCRIPTION

There are a lot of evidence based standardized diagnostic tools used in the public and the private sector. KESYs use evidence- based standardized for the Greek school population tests. Mainly they use the Greek version of the Wechsler Intelligent Scale Test for Children, WPPSI -III and the Athina test.

WISC –III is suitable for children between the age of 6 and 17 years. It consists of 13 individual scales that evaluate a different aspect of intelligence, but all together express the General Intelligence of the child. Verbal scales assess the audio-lingual communication route and use audio-speech material. Practical scales assess the visual-motor communication route. Together they provide the General Intelligence Quotients, but also very useful information about the child's processing, thinking and weak areas that require particular attention.

Athina test is a psycho-educational, multi-thematic diagnostic tool for learning difficulties for children between 5 and 9 years. It is designed to provide teachers or other specialists with a detailed description of a child's current state in key areas of development and identify deficit areas which might prevent the child from meeting school learning requirements and need special intervention. Athina test is used widely by the educational community. It consists of subscales which assess mental ability, grammatical and auditory completion, auditory and visual memory, grapho-phonological awareness, neuropsychological maturation. WPPSI- III is an intelligence test for preschool children aged from 2.6 to 7.3 years. It follows the pattern of WISC – III assessing practical and verbal scales and the general intelligence

There are also 12 other standardized tests implemented in the framework of EPEAEK (Operational Program of Education and Initial Training) 2000-2006 of the Ministry of Education which consist of tests assessing preschool and school children in many areas, as reading and comprehension, written and oral expression and comprehension, speech disorders, memory, psychosocial adjustment, learning difficulties, attention and concentration span.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives are the diagnosis and differentiated diagnosis of learning or other difficulties, the specification of the type of the difficulty, in order to design the individualized Educational Program and the appropriate intervention program or the suitable accommodations for the child. Thus the main objective of the diagnostic procedure is to find out the best possible way to support the child to learn, to respond and to adapt in the educational setting and outside it.

TARGET GROUPS

Specialists from the public (e.g. KESY) or the private sector may apply standardized diagnostic tools to preschool and school children at risk or those who have any kind of difficulties in their academic performance at school or in other sectors as the social, psychological etc.

WHEN

Whenever a child fails to meet the developmental stages and the achievements expected in his/her age, a diagnostic procedure must take place by experts in order to determine the specific fields and skills that create under-performance or difficulties to the child and then activate the analogous mechanisms.

HOW

The diagnostic procedure is held by certified experts of diagnostic bodies (such as KESY), only with the consensus of the parents.

LINKS

<http://www.dyskolies.gr/files/ergaleia/2.pdf>

edu-gate.minedu.gov.gr/amea/prakseis_epeaek/yliko_gia_aksiologish_math_dyskolion.pdf

<http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/publications/epitheorisi/teyxos17/005-039.pdf>

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SEN

TITLE

Methodology for assessment and eligibility criteria for SEN

DESCRIPTION

Assessment procedures are held by experts as psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, depending on the particular area that the test estimates. The formal assessment in public diagnostic bodies, and in most private centres as well, are held by interdisciplinary teams of experts by formal standardized tests. There are many types of tests like intelligence tests, personality, speech and language, behavioural, visual-audio motor ability, interests and skills, educational readiness, academic achievements etc. A very useful tool are also non-formal procedures, as the systematic observation, the student's portfolio, in-school tests and projects etc.

Any student who shows signs of difficulties or underperformance in one of those sectors, is eligible for assessment procedures.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of all tests conducted to students is to identify their special educational profile or needs, their difficulties and their social-psychological status. Tests though must be objective, valid and reliable and standardized in a big, representative sample of the Greek population.

Moreover tests must have adequate instructions for application, grading and analysing the results, in order for their outcomes to be useful and to provide the necessary information as the estimation of the student's learning point, what are the domains where he/she is not sufficient, what point he/she must reach. Moreover, the assessment must target to the diagnosis and differentiation, the intervention programming, the assessment of the educational, psychological, social accommodations.

TARGET GROUPS

Every student considered to show any sign of difficulty should be evaluated. Students with difficulties in language processing (phonological awareness, comprehension, narration, vocabulary or for school children spelling, reading, writing), cognitive processing (memory, attention, completion, etc), social behavior (cooperation, rules etc.)

WHEN

Even from the very early age of pre-school or early school years, teachers and experts may recognize differentiations from the norm in specific areas, such as mobility, speech or cognitive development. Depending on the intensity and frequency of occurrence, these deviations may lead to difficulties in school, underperformance or even school failure.

HOW

The first to identify difficulties are parents and teachers. Usually teachers are the first who make non-formal assessments and observation of the child's difficulties and implement the first minor accommodations. If they do not improve the situation, the teacher fills in a descriptive pedagogical report and the student is referred to formal committees for the formal diagnostic and intervention procedure.

LINKS

<https://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/retrieve/4778/1373.pdf>

https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/assessment-for-learning-and-pupils-with-special-educational-needs_assessment_for_learning_el.pdf

<http://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/>

EVENTS TO DISSEMINATE BEST PRACTICES LINKS ARE ENOUGH WITHOUT DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

TITLE

Dissemination of best practices

DESCRIPTION

Many seminars are held by the public sector and especially bodies belonging to the Ministry of Education which disseminate good practices. These are the 71 KESYs, 21 Educational Coordinators of Special Education and Training, University Departments, Centres for Continuing Education and Training, parental or private organizations.

Seminars on tests are held by Psychiatric clinics (e.g. 1st Psychiatric clinic of the University of Athens), non profitable organizations and Centres for Continuing Education and Training.

OBJECTIVES

The dissemination of best practices aims at spreading knowledge and information throughout the educational community for the benefit of SEN children.

TARGET GROUPS

A wide variety of professionals, and not only, are the target group of best practices: Psychologists, child psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health counsellors, special educators, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, students, teachers and parents.

WHEN

Conferences and seminars are held very often. Nevertheless, the prerequisites for participation vary.

HOW

Participation in seminars, conferences etc.

LINKS

https://www.uoa.gr/foitites/symboyleytikes_vpiresies/kentro_psychikis_vgieinis_byrona_kaisarianis/

<http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/publications/epitheorisi/teyxos17/005-039.pdf>

<https://www.semifind.gr/seminaria/home>

<https://www.edra-coop.gr/el/news/news2/item/163-wisc-v-may-19.html>

<http://www.specialeducation.gr/frontend/index.php>

http://www.dikepsy.gr/index.php?view=view_seminars&option=seminars&item=1398864665&lang=el

<https://www.motiboaxiologisi.gr/tools.php?nid=3>

Legislation in place for SEN (rights and recognition)

SPECIFIC LAW/S AND/OR REGULATIONS ABOUT SEN (INCLUDING AUTISM, ADHD, DYSLEXIA ETC) AND EDUCATION

TITLE

Laws for SEN students

DESCRIPTION

The latest law on SEN education is Law No. 4547 of 2018 which reorganized supportive structures in primary and secondary education i.e. KESYs (former KEDDY) and PEKES. This law defines the procedure for assessment and evaluation of SEN students. Teachers who observe some particular learning difficulties in students, should refer them and their parents firstly to the EDEAY of the school and then to the Centers for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY Centers).

FEK 2585/ 2018 determines the duties of the special education teachers and Special Educational Staff.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

Law No 4115 of 2013 and FEK 315/2014 determined the formulation and the duties of the EDEAY members. Another very important law was 3699 of 2008 which extended the meaning of SEN students and Special Education and Training. This law was the first to determine that SEN students are also those with dysgraphia, dysorthography and ADHD.

Law 2817 of 2000 was the first which specified SEN students and established the Centres of Evaluation and Support for SEN students and the Integration Departments. Law 2817 first mentioned the terms dyslexia, dysanagnosia, dyscalculia and autism.

OBJECTIVES

The SEN education target is to offer to SEN students the best possible education, so that they develop fully their personality and skills in order to include them in the mainstream education system, if possible, and generally, in every aspect of the social and professional life.

TARGET GROUPS

All school population of preschool, primary and secondary educations students of all types of schools.

LINKS

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education_new/index_gr.htm

https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2018/EPAL_N_4547_FEK_102A_12-06-2018.pdf4115/2013

https://www.kodiko.gr/nomologia/document_navigation/142858/nomos-3699-2008

<https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-ekpaideuse/n-4115-2013.html>

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/fek/1-fek-systash-eeday>

FORMAL DEFINITION OF SEN

TITLE

Formal definition of Special Educational Needs

DESCRIPTION

According to the official definition (law 3699/2008) Special Education and Training are all the educational services provided to SEN students and students with disabilities by the state, which has the obligation to provide it to all students and improve it constantly.

SEN students are those who demonstrate important learning difficulties due to sensory, mental, cognitive, developmental and (neuro)psychological difficulties, which affect the school adaptation and learning procedure for a period of time or permanently.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the SEN education, as stated officially, is to offer to SEN students the best possible education, so that they develop fully their personality and skills in order to include them in the general education system (if possible), and in every aspect of the social and professional life. One major target is the full inclusion of SEN students, their equal social development and acceptance through the “design for all” principle.

TARGET GROUPS

According to the law, SEN students are those with learning difficulties (dyslexia, dysanagnosia, dyscalculia dysgraphia, dysorthography), ADHD, sensory impairments (visual, audio), mental deficits, motor deficits, chronic illness, speech and language disorders, pervasive developmental disorders (autism spectrum), students with complex cognitive, emotional and social difficulties and students with behavioral problems due to parental neglecting, abuse or domestic.

Finally, SEN students are also considered the gifted and extremely talented students.

WHEN

The special education and training is provided by the official Education System to SEN students in preschools, primary and secondary schools through formal, informal and lifelong learning educational bodies and procedures.

HOW

The above objectives are implemented through the early diagnosis, the assessment and evaluation of the SEN, the systematic early intervention, the implementation of special educational programs, the special accommodations (tools, material) and any adaptation needed.

LINKS

http://edu-gate.minedu.gov.gr/amea/prakseis_epeaek/MD_epeaek.pdf

<https://blogs.sch.gr/2dimstav/files/2013/02/%CE%BD%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82-3699-2008-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF-%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%B1%CE%B3%CF%89%CE%B3%CE%AE%CF%82.pdf>

Early intervention programs**SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM****TITLE**

Early intervention programs in the public sector

DESCRIPTION

The 3699/2008 Law for Special Education states that Early Intervention is implemented through early medical diagnosis and systematic intervention during pre-school age. This intervention is provided by the Early intervention classes in Special Education and Training preschool units by specialized kindergarten teachers who construct, implement and evaluate these programs.

Moreover the Ministerial Decision 5614/2018 (FEK) also defines that the KESY staff and especially the KESY's kindergarten teachers, have the responsibility for the design of early intervention programs and the support of the SEN pre-school children and their families and teachers.

Early intervention units also operate in public Paediatric Hospitals.

OBJECTIVES

The 3699/2008 law defines that Special Education has an inclusive character and mentions that inclusion objectives are achieved through:

- Early medical diagnosis.
- Systematic intervention during pre-school age provided by the local special school units, through the development of EI classes (article 2).

The target is to support SEN children to develop harmonically their personality and skills, to improve their potential, in order to be able to attend the general school, to achieve social development and equal accessibility to all educational services.

The objectives of KESYs are the design of compensatory, early intervention programs and the multidimensional support of the child and the family.

TARGET GROUPS

According to the law Early Intervention classes operate within Special preschool units in order to support children aged 4 up to 7 years old.

Nevertheless, parents may ask for early intervention programs in public clinics (e.g. General Paediatric Hospital Pan. and Aglaia Kyriakou in Athens, Ag. Sofia in Thessaloniki) and in educational settings, as the schools for deaf children, before the age of 4, from the time the special educational needs are diagnosed.

WHEN

Depending on the severity of the SEN, parents may ask for early intervention programs.

Nevertheless, the full implementation of these programs in educational settings are usually provided when the child enters preschool.

HOW

Children with formal diagnosis from KESYs are the ones entitled to the educational and early intervention programs of pre-school special education units.

LINKS

https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/early-childhood-intervention-analysis-of-situations-in-europe-key-aspects-and-recommendations_eci_el.pdf

<https://blogs.sch.gr/2dimstav/files/2013/02/%CE%BD%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82-3699-2008-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF-%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%B1%CE%B3%CF%89%CE%B3%CE%AE%CF%82.pdf>

<http://specialeducation.gr>

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education/kofosi-a/kofosi-a-part-04.pdf

<https://idrimakofon.gr/%CE%BA%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%BF-%CE%AD%CE%B3%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%AD%CE%BC%CE%B2%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82/>

<https://slideplayer.gr/slide/1970027/>

SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE IN THE PRIVATE SYSTEM

TITLE

Early intervention specialists in non-public sector

DESCRIPTION

There are many bodies who offer early intervention programs which are not public but are not necessarily profitable. These are non-profit organizations (NPOs), associations of parents of children with disabilities, non-governmental organizations. Of course, there are also many private institutions which offer early intervention services.

Indicatively the following links provide many information about available NGOs, NPOs, parental organizations and private institutions.

OBJECTIVES

The objective in all early intervention programs is to create tailor made educational programs aiming at the full development of the child's cognitive, conceptual, psychokinetic and psycho-emotional sector. This is achieved through reducing learning difficulties, behavioural and social problems as much as possible, in order to reach school preparedness skills, social inclusion and a better quality of life.

Another critical objective of early intervention program is the guidance of parents.

TARGET GROUPS

The target groups are children with a variety of cognitive, movement, sensory and developmental problems from birth to school age.

WHEN

Whenever a child is diagnosed as a SEN child, parents may also refer to non-public organizations or institutions to ask for early intervention programs, according to the child's special difficulty.

HOW

All these organizations have internet sites where anyone can find information. The first URL provides a full catalogue of all the non-public institutions and organizations of all regions of Greece.

LINKS

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise>

<http://goneisamea.gr/>

<https://www.elepap.gr/el/>

<https://www.edra-coop.gr/el/>

<https://www.noesi.gr/book/intervention/mathisiakes-diskolies>

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/proimi-paremvasi>

<https://amimoni.gr/>

<https://www.eps-ath.gr/el/>

<https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/citizen/c69-xrhisimoi-syndesmoi/352-syllogoi-asthenwn>

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN - DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

TITLE

Development and implementation of the Personal Educational Plan for SEN students

DESCRIPTION

For each pupil with disabilities and special educational needs, the Personalized Educational

Plan is designed by the interdisciplinary team of EDEAY or KESY, is drawn up and implemented by the relevant teacher of Special Education, in collaboration with the class teacher, the Special Education School Coordinator and the Special education staff. The parents of the pupil and the Special Educational staff of the school unit do also participate in the design of the Personalized Educational Program in co-operation with KESY.

The PEP defines the current state of the student, the long-term goals which are divided to short-term goals and these in steps of implementation (task analysis). The PEP also defines the percentage of success that will be considered secure, the time of implementation as well as the accommodations, the material, tools or equipment needed. (Law 4547/2018, 3699/2008)

OBJECTIVES

The PEP is a very efficient way to help SEN students achieve short- and long-term learning goals. Its advantage is that it takes into account the pace of learning and the instructional approach which corresponds better to the needs of each learner. Learning objectives, approaches, and content may vary, based on learner needs. In addition, learning activities are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests and learning profile.

TARGET GROUPS

All SEN students are entitled to a PEP which must be designed by the EDEAY or KESY if needed.

WHEN

When a student is assessed by EDEAY or KESY, the interdisciplinary team forms a PEP for the specific student and his/her needs.

HOW

The plan is implemented by the special education teacher, or the class teacher, or other specialists, depending on the needs of the student.

LINKS

http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education_new/index_gr.htm

http://www.oepek.gr/pdfs/meletes/aepek_meletl

http://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/EDEAY/%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82%20%CE%95%CE%95%CE%A0_%CE%92%CE%9B%CE%91%CE%A7%CE%9F%CE%A0.pdf

<https://eproceedings.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/edusc/article/viewFile/172/137>

<https://info.edmentum.com/rs/780-NRC-339/images/Personalized%20Learning%20Workbook.pdf>

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS ARE PROMOTED THROUGH FORMAL EVENTS

TITLE

Formal events and bodies for promoting evidence-based programs

DESCRIPTION

Evidence based program are promoted through official educational bodies, as the Greek Ministry of Education, the Pedagogical Institution, the Institute of Educational Policy, the Institute of Cultural and Educational Technology, the Institute of Language Processing, the National Documentation Center. All the above implement conferences, seminars, online programs which promote evidence-based programs. Evidence-based programs are also promoted by educational scientific magazines and proceedings of conferences.

The PEKES and the Educational Coordinators, in cooperation with KESY also disseminate programs proven effective by organizing seminars, conferences and in-school training and workshops.

The Peripheral Training Centers (PEK) also implement training programs for SEN students.

The same holds for University Departments as well as Centers of life-long Education.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the promotion of the evidence-based programs is to cover specific needs of the educational process by considering current trends in Education and special education, innovative methods and tools, the enrichment and the evolution of the learning goals and the curricula.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

TARGET GROUPS

The target group of these formal dissemination processes are all involved in the education of SEN students, i.e. teachers, special education teachers, psychologists, social workers and any other specialty working in the SEN education

WHEN

Educational conferences and seminars are held very often so that all professionals can update their knowledge and techniques.

HOW

The PEKES and KESY seminars and in-school trainings are usually obligatory for teachers and other professionals. The same holds for the PEK training which is obligatory for the new appointed educators.

LINKS

<http://www.ekt.gr>

<http://www.ilsp.gr/>

<http://www.iep.edu.gr/el/>

http://www.pi-schools.gr/library/pi-lib/hb_ejournals.htm

<https://www.econtent.ekt.gr/el/discovery/content/ejournals>

<http://www.ediamme.edc.uoc.g>

http://www.kemete.sch.gr/?page_id=91

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/dimofili/43306-21-10-19-hlektroniki-ekdosi-tou-diktyou-evrydiki>

<http://www.gsrt.gr/central.aspx?sld=128I508I1379I646I528351>

SPECIALISTS USE EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS**TITLE**

Evidence-based programs used by SEN specialties in GREECE#

DESCRIPTION

According to the official publications and practices, SEN teachers and specialties use evidence-based approaches which correspond to the philosophy of inclusion. The methodologies proven to be effective by evidence are the energetic-active learning methods. These involve the collaborative, experiential, project – based, multisensory approaches and problem-solving techniques. Differentiation is a dominant philosophy founded in many researches, as is the new technology exploitation in the learning procedure, especially the digital educational software.

Interdisciplinary programs and cross-curricularity are also strongly promoted by the formal curricula. These include environmental education programs, health, occupational, cultural, European programs.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of these evidence-based programs is to secure the equality in educational settings for all students. Moreover, the goal is to provide SEN students with the best possible methods, techniques, tools and material, according to their needs, in order to provide the best possible learning conditions, the development of their personalities and skills, the best adaptation and psychosocial adjustment.

TARGET GROUPS

These evidence-based programs are implemented mainly by specialists in special schools and integration departments which function inside mainstream schools. Of course, many teachers implement them in their classes, where they may (or may not) have SEN students, because there is a wide recognition of their efficacy.

WHEN

Innovative or student-centred active learning programs are implemented whenever the teacher decides that the subject is appropriate for this kind of practices.

The interdisciplinary and cross-curriculum programs are implemented at specific hours.

HOW

Programs are implemented in-class with the assistance of technology or other material, usually by teams on a differentiated base.

LINKS

<http://www.pi->

schools.gr/download/programs/erevnes/ax_poiot_xar_prot_deflt_ekp/poiot_ekp_erevn/s_197_240.pdf
http://www.iep.edu.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28:2012-05-16-12-21-34&catid=33&Itemid=151&lang=el
<http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/handle/10795/992>
<http://www.ekt.gr/el/scientific-publications>

EFFICIENCY OF INTERVENTION IS SYSTEMATICALLY MONITORED, AND PROGRAMS ADJUSTED

TITLE

Monitoring and Evaluation of the efficiency of the interventions

DESCRIPTION

According to the latest law on Special Education, (L. 4547/2018, article 4) the mission of PEKES (Regional Educational Planning Centers) is the educational planning, the monitoring, the coordination and the support of the educational task of school units. PEKES and the Educational Coordinators provide their scientific and pedagogical knowledge and support and also implement the assessment of the educational work in a regional level.

School Unit of Special Education and Training (SMEAE), autonomous or integrated, provide a report, that includes the monitoring of educational actions, practices, tools and material used by educators to the Educational Coordinator.

Moreover, according to the same law, and as a result of this evaluation, they organize and carry out educational and training programs for educators, with the cooperation of the Institute of Educational Policy. Training programs, especially those designed for SEN students, are usually implemented with the collaboration of KESY, which also guides the adjustments of learning programs necessary for SEN students. According to the Institute of Educational Policy the school unit estimates the current status of students and designs actions to improve the quality of the provided education.

The interdisciplinary committee of EDEAY also contributes to the monitoring and adjustments of the learning programs of SEN students.

OBJECTIVES

Feedback and adjustment are an important part of the educational procedure. Monitoring and assessment techniques provide the feedback the educator needs in order to adjust, improve or re-design their plans. The goals of the monitoring processes is to find out the response of the intervention by SEN students, the degree of accomplishment of the pre-set aims, the definition of possible deviation from the aims, the prominence of best practices, tools, methods, materials, the tracking of strong and weak points in the implementation of specific programs, the benefits for the wider educational community. Besides it contributes in collaborative practices and it reveals possible needs and fields for further training and education.

TARGET GROUPS

The target group are SEN teachers and educators, special education staff and other SEN professionals in school units.

WHEN

The annual report of SMEAE is implemented and submitted at the end of the school year to the Educational Coordinator. But all the other actions of monitoring, guidance, training take place throughout the school year, whenever the conditions or the needs lead to it.

HOW

Educators monitor and adjust their educational work and its outcomes by collaborative practices, data collection through observation, text analysis, tests, interviews, portfolios, questionnaires, discussions, reports and further training (e.g. continuous self-education, seminars, in-school training, formal training).

LINKS

<http://aee.iep.edu.gr/>
<http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/publications/epitheorisi/teyxos12/xarisis.pdf>
http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/programs/erevnes/ax_poiot_xar_prot_deflt_ekp/poiot_ekp_erevn/s_391_436.pdf
http://www.opengov.gr/yypepth/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2010/06/Protasi_Autoaksiologisis.pdf

<http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/handle/10795/1103>
<https://dspace.lib.uom.gr/handle/2159/17015>
<https://eproceedings.epublishing.ekt.gr/>
http://www.diapolis.auth.gr/epimorfotiko_uliko/index.php/2014-09-06-09-18-43/2014-09-06-09-36-01/46-d2-sofou?showall=1

Accommodation, modification and support in educational place

CLASS DEDICATED TO SEN CHILDREN

TITLE

Classes dedicated to SEN students

DESCRIPTION

In cases where the educational needs are severe and the student cannot follow the curriculum, even with the support of the integration department, an autonomous Special Education and Training Units (SMEAE) is selected. This can be an autonomous school unit SMEAE, an autonomous class or a branch of a school unit that operates in hospitals, rehabilitation centres or various institutions (juvenile care institutions, chronically ill institutions, or Education Units of Mental Health and Rehabilitation centers) in which SEN students live. In cases where the student has severe health problems for a short- or long-term period that do not allow the school attendance, special education is provided at home or a tele-education program is implemented.

OBJECTIVES

Classes and units dedicated to SEN students in most cases are supported by specialized staff as psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, etc. Together with SEN teachers all this staff provides to SEN students a broad, multi-level support that aims at the complete development of all aspects of the child. Through setting clear educational goals and objectives, developing and following a structured, tailor-made training program and producing and exploiting a variety of pedagogical resources and materials, the students achieve the most of their potentials. They demonstrate positive achievements in a variety of fields: The academic, the psychosocial, the physical, the emotional, the adaptation mechanisms, autonomy, self-regulation, self-esteem.

TARGET GROUPS

The Greek educational system follows the philosophy of the least restricted environment. Thus, autonomous SEN classes or schools are proposed only for children with major difficulties, who cannot follow the curriculum, even with support. Besides, the special unit have many specialties. Their presence in the Special School and their collaboration with teachers, students and parents provides support, guidance and assistance in the context of school day-to-day life and children receive special services.

WHEN

Students may attend special school units or classes at all grades. There are special preschool units, and even early intervention units for children before preschool, special primary school units, special school in the secondary education as well as special vocational schools and workshops.

HOW

In order for students to attend SMEAE an evaluation report from KESY is necessary. The report must state which particular type of school is the best according to the specific type of needs.

LINKS

http://edu-gate.minedu.gov.gr/amea/Vivlio_PI/downloads/Vivlio_Ekp/kefalaia/10N3699.pdf
<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/sxoleia-eidiki-ekpaideusi-5>
http://users.sch.gr/christinakis/superedu/map_eae/
https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2017/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A_2103_%CE%92_2017.pdf
https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2018/EPAL_N_4547_FEK_102A_12-06-2018.pdf
<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/smea>
<http://www.pi->

schools.gr/special_education_new/html/gr/8emata/sxol_monades/sx_monades.htm
<https://www.seepeaa.gr/displayITM1.asp?ITMID=640>

"SEN FRIENDLY" CLASS IN THE SCHOOL

TITLE

SEN friendly classes – Integration Departments in mainstream school units

DESCRIPTION

Following the philosophy and the principles of inclusion, but at the same time responding to the individual needs of SEN students, Integration Departments or classes have been founded in mainstream schools (law 2817/2000, 3699/2008) of all grades: In preschools, primary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums and vocational schools. Children are attending their class but for up to 10 hours per week students work within the Integration Department framework (the hours can be more than 10 in the secondary education, if it is considered necessary), individually or in small groups, depending on their specific difficulty.

In the preschool and the primary school students attend the Integration Department for some hours each week, which may change so that they do not always lose the same subject of the general class. In the secondary education, they follow the program of the mainstream class and attend in the I.D. specific subjects, depending on their needs.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Integration Department is the inclusion of students through special educational interventions and programs, implemented mainly in the Integration Department structure.

Inclusion is achieved through the presence of a SEN structure in-school, the participation of students in most teaching activities in-class, but also the support in the Integration Department with the objective of the students' re-integration in his/her general class. Thus, if a student demonstrates enough progress, he steps out of the Integration Department and follows the program of the general class.

TARGET GROUPS

The population of Integration Department are usually students with mild SEN. Mostly they are students with learning difficulties but also students with other mild difficulties are not excluded. The condition for their entry in the Integration Department is that they are SEN students, but their difficulties allow them – with the support they receive from the Integration Department - to respond to the requirements and follow the curriculum of their grade.

WHEN

A student enters the Integration Department depending on the severity of his/her difficulties and the need for individualized program and special accommodations and interventions. The time that the student will be supported by the Integration Department depends on his/her needs and progress. It can be a restricted period of time or more or even for his/her whole studentship.

HOW

A student can attend the supportive program of the Integration Department if he/she has the proposition of KESY and the consensus of parents. Not all schools though provide an Integration Department. Thus students that need to be supported by one, must transfer to the closest unit with an Integration Department.

LINK

<https://www.ipaidia.gr/paideia/oi-smeae-kai-ta-tmimata-entaksis-gia-to-2017-2018>
http://users.sch.gr/christinakis/superedu/map_eae/
<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/sxoleia-eidiki-ekpaideusi-5>

IN-CLASS SUPPORT

TITLE

In-class support by the class teacher

DESCRIPTION

Students with mild difficulties may attend the mainstream class without any other

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

outside assistance structure, except the teacher of the class. The class teacher of the general/mainstream class supports the SEN student in-class with the cooperation and support of KESY and the Educational Coordinators and the use of inclusion techniques as the differentiating teaching, multisensory approaches, collaborative and experiential methods.

OBJECTIVES

Accessibility is a quality indicator for schools. They must develop learning support mechanisms for each student based on the principle of equity and on values such as respect for diversity. Inclusion is the expression of these principles. Inclusion of children with and without special educational needs (SEN) shapes frameworks and teaching practices that perceive individual differences not as a problem, but as an opportunity to enrich the teaching and learning process.

TARGET GROUPS

Students with mild learning difficulties who attend the class curriculum, or with mild behavioural problems may attend the general class with the support of the class teacher.

WHEN

Students with mild difficulties, who can follow the class curriculum, attend the mainstream class with the support of the class teacher.

HOW

These students may or may not have a KESY report. If the students have a KESY report, it defines the kind of difficulties and gives the appropriate guidance to the class teacher in order to support the student.

LINKS

http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/sxoltaxi/tomos_A.pdf

<http://aee.iep.edu.gr/>

https://www.alfavita.gr/ekpaideysi/204259_paidi-me-dyslexia-stin-taxi-odigos-gia-daskaloys-kai-goneis

http://www.edc.uoc.gr/~ptde/ptde/anounc/b_tomeas/diat/LD_Panteliadou_A.pdf

<http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=2162&cpage=1>

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT**TITLE**

Individual support at home

DESCRIPTION

Individualized teaching at home is an option only in cases of serious short or long-term health problems, which do not allow the student to attend school.

The teacher evaluates the student and forms a Personalized Educational Program with the collaboration of KESY or the Educational Coordinator.

Home teaching programs may also be implemented through tele-education systems.

OBJECTIVES

The objective is to provide to the student who faces a serious problem or severe difficulties the education he/she is eligible for in the framework of his/her home as far as the conditions do not allow the transfer of the student at school.

Nevertheless, the ultimate aim is to facilitate the student's comeback and integration in the school life when this is possible.

TARGET GROUPS

Students with severe health problems or severe SEN that do not allow the school education.

WHEN

An individualized support at home may be provided whenever a serious usually health problem makes it impossible for the student to go to school.

HOW

According to the Law 2817/2000 severe SEN that demand home teaching are proposed be KESY.

The approval of home teaching is made by the Regional Director of Education of the respective grade, attended by the student, following a reasoned recent medical opinion stating the duration of the required stay at home (Law 3699/2008). This opinion is provided by a public paediatric clinic or public health committee.

LINKS

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/eidikh-agwgh/432-paroxh-ekpaideyshs-sto-spiti-smea>

http://www.dsanet.gr/Epikairothta/Nomothesia/ya10645_gd4.htm

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING ASSISTANT

TITLE

In-class individual teaching assistant

DESCRIPTION

In Greece individual teaching assistant is only the teacher of parallel support. In-class support may also be offered by a special education teacher who accompanies the student inside the school class and assists him/her with the school material and work individually. This is the parallel support teacher. Parallel support is provided as a booster and integration practice and it hasn't a child-guarding role. On the contrary he/she is considered to be the second-class teacher, must cooperate with the general class teacher and in some cases their roles can be switched within the classroom.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of parallel support is for the pupil to receive education and training in the least restrictive environment and thus develop socially, academically and psychologically.

The ultimate aim is the SEN student to become autonomous in the general school class, so that the parallel support teacher is not required for all the hours of the school day or even at all.

TARGET GROUPS

Students who need individualized support in order to attend and respond to the teaching program and the curriculum may receive a parallel support teacher.

Nevertheless, the law defines (L. 3699/2008, art. 6) that even students with more severe needs may receive a parallel support teacher, if there is not in their region a special school setting.

WHEN

Students of all grades of education may receive a parallel support teacher for some hours per week or for all the hours of the school program, if KESY considers that this support is absolutely necessary for the student.

HOW

Only after the proposition of KESY may a student receive the parallel support teacher.

LINKS

<https://elearningekpa.gr/courses/eidiki-agogi-entaksiaki-ekpaideusi-kai-parallili-stiriksi>

<https://www.newseae.gr/component/tags/tag/parallili-stiriksi>

http://www.specialeducation.gr/files4users/files/pdf/odigies_pstisiksi.pdf

<http://www.0-18.gr/downloads/porisma-efarmogi-toy-thesmoytis-parallilis-stiriksis-mathiton-me-anapiria-i-me-eidikes-ekpaideytikes-anagkes/>

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/eidikh-agwgh>

<file:///C:/Users/pcuser/Downloads/15889-45123-2-PB.pdf>

Learning & Development opportunities for SEN children (outside school)

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS/ LINK

TITLE

After school programs

DESCRIPTION

The Ministry of Education and the secondary education schools offer a compensatory education, afternoon program, called “enhancing teaching” for students who have difficulties following the class material and demands. SEN students may also benefit from this program, which takes place in school, in after school hours and is implemented by schoolteachers.

Non-school programs that support children with SEN are also implemented by parental organizations centers, non-profitable organizations or municipality centers for students and SEN students.

There are also a lot of private centers, specialized in assessment and treatment practices for any difficulty the child presents, by using interventions, the appropriate material and by creating a personalized program based on the student’s needs. Programs operate mainly afternoons. These centers offer a special pedagogical program, such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, special creative work for children with learning difficulties, city exits (for social inclusion), educational workshops, and parenting and support groups. In special cases, programs are operated at home.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of all after school programs is to provide the opportunities to SEN children outside school to develop their potential by offering an open, supportive personalized program. This could make a major positive difference in their learning progress too. For this reason, non-school programs have been developed to improve the learning abilities of children with SEN.

TARGET GROUPS

The public “enhancing teaching” is offered to any student who shows under-performance and faces difficulties to respond to the curriculum of the class he/she attends. The other organizations and centres may specialize in certain kind of difficulties and programs. The student and his/her parents decide which is the appropriate for them.

WHEN

As long as a student feels that he/she needs support with his/her schoolwork, he/she may apply for the enhancing teaching.

HOW

Parent fill in an application form and state which subjects their child will attend. In the other centres parents discuss and decide which program is suitable for their child.

LINKS

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/gymnasia/1912-sked-kentra-enischtytikhs-didaskalias>

<https://www.noesi.gr/mko>

<https://www.noesi.gr/dimosia>

<https://www.noesi.gr/dimosia/panelladika>

<https://www.noesi.gr/idiotika>

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/omadika-programmata>

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoisekiesi>

<https://www.noesi.gr/map>

<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/kdap-mea-about>

www.dyslexia-goneis.gr/

www.adhdhellas.org/

HOMEWORK ASSISTANT TOOLS FOR PARENTS/ LINK

TITLE

Homework assistant tool

DESCRIPTION

A very powerful tool for parents in their effort to support SEN children with homework, is the new educational technology that exploits all the advantages of multimedia and electronic media. New technology tools (flyers, tablets, educational software etc.) have become very popular between young learners and thus a significant tool to assist parents in their children's learning processes. Nevertheless, if parents need external help, this can be provided by the KESY specialists who provide guidance and support. Moreover, there are centers which provide home-based services by qualified staff that uses home intervention programs. When a home-based teaching is needed, a center therapist, in consultation with parents, visits the child's home. At the same time, the parents have at their disposal assistant tools as well, in order to help their children in the learning process.

OBJECTIVES

The use of technology enhances interest and motives and it is a challenge for children with SEN. Motives are extremely important for academic success and a powerful tool for parents. Besides, new technology tools exploit other very important factors. The multisensory approach, the self-regulation mechanism and the time, environment and resources management. Interactive activities that involve more than one senses empower skill development in SEN children, e.g. touchscreens. Secondly homework demands self-regulation skills as the teacher in not present. The educational technology helps the student to monitor and adapt appropriately his/her thoughts, desires, feelings and activities in order to achieve the learning goals. Finally, electronic media allows the student and the parent to use time, environment and recourses according to their personal learning style, pace and needs. Moreover, it assists parents with free time management. However, if parents cannot cope with the child's difficulties, specialists are needed to organize the studying process with the appropriate tools, techniques and special pedagogical programs.

TARGET GROUPS

Assisting SEN children with their homework poses a difficult challenge for parents. Their difficulties easily lead students to avoidance behaviours. Technology balances the relationship between parents and children and motivates students, especially those with learning difficulties and ADHD.

WHEN

Whenever the extent and the severity of SEN create difficulties in everyday requirements, parents may ask for assistance in technology, KESY specialists or specialized structures.

HOW

The following links offer new technology tools and the last two centres with SEN specialties.

LINKS

<http://www.thenumberrace.com/nr/home.php>

<http://edtech.gr/>

<http://www.moocdys.eu/gr/>

<https://www.funbrain.com/>

<https://scratch.mit.edu/>

<https://gr.pinterest.com/pkoronidou/%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%B3%CF%89%CE%B3%CE%B7-%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%BF%CF%85/>

http://reader.ekt.gr/bookReader/show/index.php?lib=EDULLL&item=813&bitstream=813_01#page/6/mode/2up

<https://gr.pinterest.com/pin/501799583472714288/>

<http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/simplesearch?query=%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7&submit.x=0&submit.y=0>

<https://www.thrania.com/afises-glossa-grammatiki>

https://e-didaskalia.blogspot.com/2017/04/blog-post_507.html

LEARNING EVENTS

TITLE

Learning Events

DESCRIPTION

Learning non-school events include an uprising number of workshops, tutorials and interactive seminars and creative activities which involve theatrical play, handicrafts, constructions, art, learning programs etc. There are also many summer schools, as well as summer camps offering a variety of amusement and educational programs. These may be public, municipal or private camps.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of all these activities is to optimize the skills of SEN students in all aspects: Social, developmental, psychological, academic. The important thing is that these goals are achieved through play, fun, creative activities that empower the self-esteem of children and their adjustment competence.

TARGET GROUPS

SEN children of preschool age up to teenagers.

WHEN

Usually these activities take place on weekends, evenings and during summer.

HOW

Parents need to apply to the specific structure.

LINKS

<http://www.odigostoupoliti.eu/tag/kentra-dimiourgikis-apascholisis-paidion-kdap/>

<http://www.odigos-agoras.gr/%CE%9A%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B1/%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%AF/%CE%9A%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82%CE%91%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%87%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82>

<http://www.posgamea.gr/>
<https://www.noesi.gr/pronoise/eleftheros-xronos>
<https://www.e-dimosio.gr/ellada/158821/pedikes-kataskinosis-dimon-proipothesis-ke-dikeologitika-engrafis/>

chapter 2



Chapter 2
IRELAND

IRELAND

COUNTRY FACTS

In Ireland, students with special educational requirements benefit from the regulations of a special law entitled *The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)*, in force since 2004. All aspects of this act have not yet been enacted.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was passed into law in July 2004. Special educational needs are defined in this act as: "... a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition."

The EPSEN Act recognises that special educational needs may arise from four different areas of disability:

- physical
- sensory
- mental health
- learning disability

The key message in the EPSEN Act is that children with special educational needs should be educated, wherever possible, in an inclusive environment with children who do not have special educational needs. The EPSEN Act goes on to clarify that there are two exceptions to this commitment to educate all children together in an inclusive environment. The first exception is where an assessment, carried out under the EPSEN Act, finds that this would not be in the best interests of the child with special needs. The second is where this would not be in the best interests of the other children with whom the child is to be educated.

The EPSEN Act has not been fully implemented due to economic circumstances but this decision is under ongoing review. The sections of the Act which have come into force deal mainly with the right to be educated in an inclusive manner, the duties of schools and the establishment of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The sections of the Act which have not yet been implemented include those which give statutory rights to children with special educational needs in relation to assessment, individual education plans and the right to make appeals.

Also, *The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)* was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities.

The service is delivered through our national network of Special Educational Needs Organizers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools. And liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides funding for visiting teachers for children who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired.

Visiting teachers are qualified teachers with particular skills and knowledge of the development and education of children with varying degrees of hearing loss and/or visual impairment. They offer longitudinal support to children, their families and schools from the time of referral through to the end of post-primary education.

The frequency and nature of support takes into account a range of factors based on the individual's needs. The work of the VT involves liaising with other professionals and agencies such as audiological scientists, ophthalmology services, speech and language therapists, low vision specialists, psychologists, early intervention teams, school staff, and with parents.

Early identification of children at risk (preschool)

FORMAL DEFINITION OF "CHILDREN AT RISK"

TITLE

Children at risk is a definition used by TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) and is not usually used within the early years Education sector

DESCRIPTION

Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. This includes information on how to assess children in preschool settings. It is non statutory.

TUSLA inspects Pre-school Settings for Care and educational Provision. In the Early Years When difficulties emerge, young children may be referred to a community-based therapy service or to an early intervention team by GPs or public health nurses or through self-referral by their parent(s).

OBJECTIVES

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to empower pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education

TARGET GROUPS

All pre-school children

WHEN

Parents of children born after June 1st, 2002 can apply for their child to have an assessment under the Disability Act 2005, if they think that their child may have a disability.

HOW

Children who qualify for an assessment of need under the Disability Act 2005 have a right to:

- Assessment of their health and education needs arising from their disability
- An assessment report
- A statement of the services they will receive
- Make a complaint if they are not happy with any part of the process. Parents can apply to the HSE, through their Assessment Officer, for this independent and free assessment of need.

Since January 2010 the ECCE Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for all children aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months, regardless of family income or ability to pay.

The State supports early intervention for children with special educational needs through providing funding to several crèche/pre-school settings including:

- early intervention settings attached to mainstream and special schools
- early intervention settings attached to HSE funded service providers
- private pre-school settings supported by the ECCE scheme
- private pre-school settings supported by HSE grant aid
- home tuition.

Eligibility criteria are available on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

LINKS

<https://www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/aistear>

<https://www.tusla.ie>

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/choosing-childcare/ecce-free-preschool-year/>

<http://www.education.ie>

SCREENING PROCEDURE/ PROTOCOL FOR EDUCATORS

DESCRIPTION

This varies according to type of SEN and may involve medically trained Doctors (e.g. Paediatricians, psychiatrists) psychologists (clinical or educational). Allied health professionals (physiotherapists, occupational therapists, Speech and Language therapists) and Specialist teachers

OBJECTIVES

Schools should establish a structured policy of school-based testing in order to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. This structure should include the training of key personnel, agreed procedures for selecting the tests, deciding when to administer, managing the data and acting on the results.

TARGET GROUPS

Inclusive model

WHEN

At School Principal or Parents request

HOW

This varies according to the type of SEN. Practice varies from the vaguest of reference to ICD-10 or DSM-V; to some reference to meta-analytic peer-reviewed evidence; and there are some areas of SEN where there are formal assessment pathways (e.g. DCD) but these are often not universally agreed or indeed followed. NEPS recently provided guidance to their educational psychologists regarding the assessment of dyslexia. This guidance was not very specific as to what to do, but it did for the first time provide a welcome rejection of the IQ-attainment discrepancy approach. Although this does not seem to be currently followed by all NEPS practitioners, with some continuing to use the discrepancy model. There are no equivalents in Ireland to NIACE (UK) guidelines, nor is any reference made to them.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service that supports schools in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs. NEPS has developed a system of identifying and supporting children, known as the Continuum of Support. The Continuum of Support works at three different levels – in primary schools the levels are called, ‘Classroom Support’, ‘School Support’ and ‘School Support Plus’. In post primary schools the three levels of support are called ‘Support for All’, ‘School Support (for some)’ and ‘School Support Plus (for a few)’. Classroom Support/Support for All is really about effective classroom teaching and early identification. NEPS psychologists are most likely to engage in direct work with the students, parent and teachers at School Support Plus level.

LINKS

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Home-Page.html>

<https://ncse.ie/>

<https://www.education.ie/en/the-education-system/special-education/>

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

DESCRIPTION

At undergraduate level students can opt for Special Education Modules but this is not a compulsory element of all Courses. Differing providers offer different emphasis on their undergraduate Teaching qualification courses. The National Teaching Council oversee Initial Teacher Education. The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers states that teachers should “take personal responsibility for sustaining and improving the quality of their professional practice by: actively maintaining their professional knowledge and understanding to ensure that it is current reflecting on and critically evaluating their professional practice, in light of their professional knowledge base and availing of opportunities for career-long professional development”.

Continuing professional development is available from statutory agencies, NGOs, charities and via further postgraduate study in higher education colleges.

TARGET GROUPS

All Teachers and Special Needs Assistants

WHEN

As and when Teachers choose to avail of Training there is no mandatory requirement for continuous professional development.

HOW

Sourced through Charities and Special Education Support Service It is intended that, in planning their learning pathways, teachers will choose a combination of learning processes that best meet their learning needs.

Leading learning - would include, for example, teachers' learning related to subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, assessment, leadership, etc.

Inclusion - To include any aspect of teachers' learning aimed at improving their capacity to address and respond to the diversity of students' needs; enable participation in learning, cultures and communities; and, remove barriers within and to education through the accommodation and provision of appropriate structures and arrangements to enable each student to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her attendance at school.

ICT - would include learning that develops teachers' capacity to use ICT for enhancing teaching and learning. It would include learning related to the use of ICT to develop learners' key skills, as a tool across the curriculum, and as a tool for accessing and engaging in research.

LINKS

<https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/-New-Teachers/post-primary-teacher-training-courses.html>

<https://pdst.ie/>

https://www.dcu.ie/inclusive_and_special_education/news/2018/Feb/Professional-CertificateDiploma-Special-and-Inclusive

<https://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/education-special-educational-needs>

https://www.dcu.ie/inclusive_and_special_education/news/2018/Feb/Professional-CertificateDiploma-Special-and-Inclusivewww.ssess.ie/professional-development/sess-supported-courses

<https://www.dyslexia.ie/>

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0042_2016.pdf

<https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Professional-Development/Support-Services.html>

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education>

<https://www.pdst.ie/>

<https://www.mic.ul.ie/faculty-of-education/programme/graduate-diplomam-ed-in-special-educational-needs>

Information available for parents, educators (website, brochures, leaflets etc)

DESCRIPTION

NEPS work with teachers, parents and children to help all children develop to their potential, offering a range of services. Charities such as the Dyslexia Association of Ireland provide information and training for parents through workshops, information and training events.

Special Needs Parents Association exists to support all parents of persons with special needs and disabilities irrespective of age or diagnosis, by promoting on a national level, improved treatment, education, welfare and acceptance for our children. There are many Special Needs Parents Groups linked to specific SEN for example AsIAm which provide support and advocacy for families living with autism.

TARGET GROUPS

Parents

WHEN

At parents' request

HOW

Special Needs Parents Association a national Organisation that represents the views of all parents of persons with Special Needs and disabilities regardless of their diagnosis or age. On a national level the Association aims to represent parents who feel strongly about their children's access to the Irish education system as well as to society in general

NEPS provide support to parents of school aged children with SEN.

LINKS

<https://ncse.ie/>

<http://www.npc.ie/>

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/a-new-model-for-allocating-special-education-teaching-support-to-mainstream-primary-schools.pdf>

www.dyslexia.ie

<http://teachingcouncil.ie>

<http://specialneedsparents.ie/support-groups-ireland>

<https://snapireland.net/>

SEN specialist in the educational setting**TITLE**

Teacher allocation model - Special Education Teacher (SET)

DESCRIPTION

Special Class Teacher Special class teachers teach small classes comprised of pupils with specific special educational needs and disabilities. Special classes can be found in special schools and in some mainstream schools.

Special Education Teacher caters for a variety of learning needs throughout the school. The pupils are supported in a variety of ways including team teaching, co-teaching, early intervention, small group & individual support. The Special Education Teacher consults with class teachers to plan interventions to meet the priority learning needs of pupils. They create short-term planning documents which reflect the support plans. Outcomes are routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress and plan further interventions.

OBJECTIVES

Resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs should be used to facilitate the development of truly inclusive schools. The Teacher allocation model - Special Education Teacher (SET) is to support inclusion.

To ensure that the resources are allocated to the students with the greatest needs

For mainstream schools it is based on the school profile

TARGET GROUPS

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. The process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time - frame for review.

WHEN

When implementing the revised allocation model to address the needs of pupils with special

educational needs, schools should adopt a whole-school approach to programme planning and to the implementation of early-intervention and prevention programmes. In order to achieve this, schools will need to adapt their existing special educational needs policies to guide the new approach to the allocation of resources. A whole-school approach involves collaborative action by the school community (in consultation with parents and pupils) to improve pupil learning, behaviour and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices, and includes an evaluation of how pupils with special educational needs are identified by the school, the interventions that are put in place to meet their needs and how the outcomes of those interventions are measured and monitored. A whole-school approach should address the full continuum of needs - ranging from milder and more transient needs to difficulties that are severe and enduring

HOW

A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support. Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary. Special education teachers must be deployed to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs in schools. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education teaching resources. Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs (for example, in-class support, group withdrawal).

LINKS

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>
http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0013_2017.pdf
<http://ncse.ie/policy-advice>
https://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Inclusion/Special_Educational_Needs/Download_Special_Educational_Needs_Guidelines/Guidelines_for_teachers_of_students_with_general_learning_disabilities.html
https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf
<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Student-Support-File-Guidelines.pdf>
http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/sped_guidelines_pupils_difficulties_p.pdf

SEN department in the educational setting

TITLE

SEN departments are not traditionally found in Irish schools, though some larger schools have created these within their own schools

Formal diagnosis process

FORMAL DEFINITION OF "CHILDREN AT RISK"

TITLE

Continuum of Support framework

DESCRIPTION

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs.

At present, the formal educational assessment of school-going children is generally carried out by NEPS, or privately arranged where NEPS psychologists are not available or where parents choose to do so privately. Other assessments, such as Speech and Language or Occupational Therapy are carried out under community services at local health offices.

OBJECTIVES

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

TARGET GROUPS

All School aged children

WHEN

The Continuum of Support enables schools to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way. This means that needs can be responded to as early as possible. The principle is that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support.

HOW

The class teacher plays a key role in assessing, supporting and teaching children with special educational needs. They are supported in their work by special education support teachers. Other professionals may become involved to provide further in-depth assessment to highlight students' learning strengths and needs, where this is required.

LINKS

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/>

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools.pdf>

FORMAL AGREED PROCEDURES/PROTOCOLS FOR DIAGNOSIS**TITLE**

As Above Continuum of Support Framework

LINKS

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools>

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf

EVIDENCE-BASED STANDARDIZED DIAGNOSIS TOOLS AVAILABLE TO SPECIALISTS

TITLE

National Council for curriculum and assessment provides clear guidelines and suggested standardised test that can be used at each phase

DESCRIPTION

The selection of the appropriate standardised test instrument is a matter for decision by individual schools, provided that the tests chosen are normed for the Irish population and are consistent with the primary curriculum..

TARGET GROUPS

Primary students in 2nd /4th and 6th classes in Secondary schools the Junior cycle and senior cycle formal examinations provide assessment

WHEN

All primary schools are required by the Department of Education and Skills (Circular 0056/2011) to administer standardised tests. English medium schools are required to administer standardised testing in English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June for all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes on an annual basis with effect from 2012 onwards

HOW

National Council for curriculum and assessment provides clear guidelines and suggested standardised test that can be used at each phase.

NEPS Literacy Good Practice Guide also includes advice on testing.

LINKS

<https://www.ncca.ie/>

https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/NEPS-Literacy-Resource/neps_literacy_good_practice_guide.pdf

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Student-Support-File-Guidelines.pdf>

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SEN

TITLE

Continuum of Support framework

DESCRIPTION

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs.

In The class teacher plays a key role in assessing, supporting and teaching children with special educational needs. They are supported in their work by special education support teachers. Other professionals may become involved to provide further in-depth assessment to highlight students' learning strengths and needs, where this is required.

TARGET GROUPS

The School Support Plus process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem-solving process to help the pupil. School support plus

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

applies to those pupils whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions detailed in Classroom Support and/ or School Support plans.

WHEN

As and when the child is identified as requiring additional support

HOW

The class teacher plays a key role in assessing, supporting and teaching children with special educational needs. They are supported in their work by special education support teachers. Other professionals may become involved to provide further in-depth assessment to highlight students' learning strengths and needs, where this is required. LEARNING SUPPORT / RESOURCE and/or TEACHERS will usually be involved in both the assessment and intervention process. They may provide additional support either on a withdrawal basis or through class support. At this level it is possible that there will be more than one supporting teacher involved with the pupil.

LINKS

<https://www.sess.ie/special-education-teacher-allocation/primary/continuum-support-primary>
<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools>
<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Student-Support-File-Guidelines.pdf>

Legislation in place for SEN (rights and recognition)

SPECIFIC LAW/S AND/OR REGULATIONS ABOUT SEN (INCLUDING AUTISM, ADHD, DYSLEXIA ETC) AND EDUCATION

TITLE

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) 2004

DESCRIPTION

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was passed into law in July 2004. Special educational needs are defined in this act as: ... a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

The EPSEN Act recognises that special educational needs may arise from four different areas of disability:

- physical
- sensory
- mental health
- learning disability

OBJECTIVES

The key message in the EPSEN Act is that children with special educational needs should be educated, wherever possible, in an inclusive environment with children who do not have special educational needs. The EPSEN Act goes on to clarify that there are two exceptions to this commitment to educate all children together in an inclusive environment. The first exception is where an assessment, carried out under the EPSEN Act, finds that this would not be in the best interests of the child with special needs. The second is where this would not be in the best interests of the other children with whom the child is to be educated.

WHEN

The EPSEN Act has not been fully implemented due to economic circumstances but this decision is under ongoing review. The sections of the Act which have come into force deal mainly with

the right to be educated in an inclusive manner, the duties of schools and the establishment of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The sections of the Act which have not yet been implemented include those which give statutory rights to children with special educational needs in relation to assessment, individual education plans and the right to make appeals.

LINKS

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/>

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildrenWithSpecialEdNeeds1.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/the-education-system/special-education/>

FORMAL DEFINITION OF SEN

TITLE

EPSEN ACT

DESCRIPTION

A special educational need can arise from a child's disability, such as:

- physical
- sensory (blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hard of hearing)
- mental health
- learning disability or from another condition that results in a child learning differently from a child without that condition.

Children with disabilities may have special educational needs and require additional support in school to assist them to achieve their own individual potential. There are also children with disabilities who may not have any special educational needs that require additional supports in school.

TARGET GROUPS

Special educational needs are defined in the EPSSEN Act as: 'a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly'. On standardised tests of intelligence, categories of general learning disability are defined as: Mild GLD: IQ score of between 50 and 70 on a standardised intelligence test Moderate GLD: IQ score of between 35 and 49 on a standardised intelligence test Severe/Profound GLD: IQ score of less than 35 on a standardised intelligence test. A formal diagnosis of a general learning disability also requires that a student is experiencing a significant impairment in the area of adaptive functioning or general life skills

WHEN

This Act has not been fully enacted. Only limited parts of the Act are enacted.

LINKS

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/>

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildrenWithSpecialEdNeeds1.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/the-education-system/special-education/>

Early intervention programs

SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM

TITLE

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

DESCRIPTION

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities.

The service is delivered through our national network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) who interact with parents and schools and liaise with the HSE in providing resources to support children with special educational needs.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides funding for visiting teachers for children who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired.

Visiting teachers are qualified teachers with particular skills and knowledge of the development and education of children with varying degrees of hearing loss and/or visual impairment. They offer longitudinal support to children, their families and schools from the time of referral through to the end of post-primary education.

The frequency and nature of support takes into account a range of factors based on the individual's needs. The work of the VT involves liaising with other professionals and agencies such as audiological scientists, ophthalmology services, speech and language therapists, low vision specialists, psychologists, early intervention teams, school staff, and with parents.

LINKS

<https://ncse.ie/>

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NCSE-Guidelines-for-schools-2019-20.doc>

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Home-Page.html>

SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE IN THE PRIVATE SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION

A whole range of NGOs and charities provide support and assessment to children, parents and schools. There are also many individual and for-profit private practitioners.

HOW

This is an unregulated system

LINKS

<https://www.dyslexia.ie/>

<https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie>

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

TITLE

Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP)

DESCRIPTION

Section 15 of Circular 0030/2014 indicates that a Personalised Pupil Plan (PPP) should be a feature of provision for all students with special educational needs. Schools are encouraged to use individual planning for students with special educational needs and a care needs dimension should be included. A

stand-alone document is not necessarily required. The PPP requirement may in fact be incorporated into the DES Student Support File. The NCSE acknowledges that where a new pupil is starting school the school will require time to develop a PPP. In such cases the PPP should be submitted within six weeks of the student's start date. The education plan gives a focus to the agreed outcomes that children with special educational needs should achieve while in school and allows their progress to be recorded. It should be developed and reviewed by teachers in conjunction with parents, students and where necessary, with others involved in the child's learning. As this has not yet been enacted the Student support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and track a pupil's pathway through the continuum of support model.

OBJECTIVES

Education plans set out the learning goals to be achieved by a child over a certain time period and list the teaching strategies, resources and supports that are needed to help a child to reach those goals

TARGET GROUPS

Children with identified Special Educational Needs

WHEN

When the EPSEN Act 2004 is fully commenced, it will provide a right for children with special educational needs to have an education plan. Although this section of the Act has not yet been brought into force, many teachers and schools already use individualised education planning in their work with children with more complex special educational needs. The NCSE has produced a booklet entitled 'Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process' (2006). This guide to good practice in relation to the preparation, implementation and review of IEPs is available on the NCSE website.

HOW

A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support. Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary. Special education teachers must be deployed to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs in schools. An important aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. This gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility in how they allocate special education teaching resources. Schools may deploy special education teachers in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs (for example, in-class support, group withdrawal).

LINKS

www.ncse.ie

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0007_2019.pdf

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Delivery-for-Primary-Students-with-Special-Educational-Needs.pdf>

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS ARE PROMOTED THROUGH FORMAL EVENTS

DESCRIPTION

Available on-line calendar

TARGET GROUPS

Teachers and Parents

WHEN

As per Calendar

LINKS <https://www.sess.ie/calendar>
<https://www.dyslexia.ie>
<https://www.sess.ie/sess-primary-courses>
<https://ncse.ie/>

SPECIALISTS USE EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

DESCRIPTION

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is an internationally recognized center of excellence in research, assessment and evaluation in education. In September 2015, it was designated as a Statutory Body in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

The Centre carries out research at all levels of the education system, from preschool to adult. Research is undertaken at the request of the Department of Education and Skills, at the request of other agencies and on the initiative of the ERC itself and its staff. An assessment service is also provided through, for example, the supply of standardized tests to schools.

The universities conduct Research, and this is used to inform practice.

LINKS

<https://ncse.ie>
<https://www.dyslexia.ie>
<http://www.erc.ie/>
<https://www.tcd.ie/Education/research/>
https://www.dcu.ie/institute_of_education/index.shtm

EFFICIENCY OF INTERVENTION IS SYSTEMATICALLY MONITORED AND PROGRAMS ADJUSTED

TITLE

National Council of Special Education

DESCRIPTION

One of the NCSE's statutory roles is to carry out research in the area of special education. The overall aim of the NCSE research programme is to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of best practice in educational policy and provision for students with special educational needs. Specifically, the NCSE research programme:

- builds a robust evidence base through commissioning or conducting high quality peer-reviewed research studies;
- identifies lessons for policy or practice arising from the evidence in order to inform the development of NCSE policy advice to the Minister for Education and Skills;
- involves relevant stakeholders in an advisory capacity in our research activities;
- contributes to the dissemination of information about national and international best practice in special and inclusive education to key stakeholders, including parents, teachers and others;
- Contributes to strengthening the research infrastructure around special and inclusive education.

The Teaching Council of Ireland oversee the Programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) ensuring that all courses are supported by a clearly defined conceptual framework. The framework should be developed by providers and should be informed by research and by the Council's Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education and its Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

WHEN

The research information is disseminated, and individual practice may change. At a systemic level this is a very slow process

LINKS

<https://ncse.ie/research-reports>
<http://teachingcouncil.ie/>

Accommodation, modification and support in educational place

CLASS DEDICATED TO SEN CHILDREN

TITLE

Special Classes in Mainstream Schools

DESCRIPTION

Special classes in mainstream schools offer a supportive learning environment for students with more complex needs where mainstream classes would not, or have not been able to, meet their needs. In order to be placed in a special class a child must have a professional report stating that he/she has a special educational need and that this need is of such complexity that a special class placement could be considered. Special classes have a lower student-teacher ratio specified according to category of disability. This means that classes have small numbers of students, for example, a special class for children with moderate general learning disabilities will have one teacher for every eight children. Placement in a special class is a flexible arrangement that may change as a student's learning develops. Where possible, students in special classes should be educated alongside mainstream peers for some part of the day or week, or for some activities or subjects, in line with their needs and abilities. Students with special educational needs should, where possible, be educated in mainstream classes along with their peers, with additional supports provided as necessary. Special classes¹ are part of a continuum of educational provision that enables students with more complex special educational needs to be educated, in smaller class groups, within their local mainstream schools. They offer a supportive learning environment to students who are unable to access the curriculum in a mainstream class, even with support, for most or all of their school day.

OBJECTIVES

Students enrolled in special classes should be included in mainstream classes to the greatest extent possible, in line with their abilities.

TARGET GROUPS

students with more complex needs where mainstream classes would not, or have not been able to, meet their needs. In order to be placed in a special class a child must have a professional report stating that he/she has a special educational need and that this need is of such complexity that a special class placement could be considered

WHEN

Schools may apply to the NCSE to open a special class where a need has been identified in their area i.e. a number of students have professional reports indicating they require the support of a special class. SENOs may also approach a school directly where they are aware that a special class is or will be required in the near future. SENOs consult with other education partners (e.g. NEPS and Inspectorate) when planning to set up a special class. SENOs consult with DES School Planning and Building Section where special classes are being incorporated into a new building.

HOW

In order to access a special class a student must have a report from a relevant professional or team of professionals (for example, psychologist, speech and language therapist, psychiatrist) stating that: 1 S/he has a disability (in line with the designation of the special class in question) and 2 S/he has complex or severe learning needs that require the support of a special class setting and the reasons why this is the case. The professional report must meet DES requirements for the particular disability in question. Under no circumstances should a school place a student in a special class without such a professional report. Parents make the final decision – in conjunction with the student, school and other relevant professionals. Parents require objective and comprehensive information about the options available and should actively consult with relevant professionals (e.g. school, psychologist, special educational needs organiser (SENO), health professionals) to arrive at an informed decision.

LINKS <https://ncse.ie/special-classes>

<http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Guidelines-SettingUp-Special-Classes-PostPrimary.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/the-education-system/special-education/>

"SEN FRIENDLY" CLASS IN THE SCHOOL**TITLE**

This Class is not available in Irish schools. All classes should be SEN Friendly based on the inclusive model through the continuum of support Framework.

- **in-class support**

TITLE

Continuum of Support model

DESCRIPTION

From September 2017, students do not need to have a formal diagnosis of disability to avail of additional teaching supports in schools. Using the NEPS Continuum of Support model, schools will identify students who require additional support and will assign appropriate support to them. All children will receive additional teaching support if the school using its school-based assessment and the NEPS Continuum of Support, identifies that a child has learning needs.

OBJECTIVES

A fundamental objective is that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. This framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

TARGET GROUPS

This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs

HOW

Under the revised model, the Department provides special education teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles (including a baseline component). This gives stability to schools' staffing arrangements over a number of years. It offers schools greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly, based on pupils' needs, without the requirement for a diagnosis of disability. A key principle underpinning this revised model is that all pupils, irrespective of special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. All additional teaching support given should build on and complement the support delivered by the class/subject teacher in the ordinary classroom situation.

LINKS

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines_

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/Guidelines-for-Primary-Schools-Supporting-Pupils-with-Special-Educational-Needs-in-Mainstream-Schools.pdf>

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0007_2019.pdf

- **individual support**

TITLE

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

DESCRIPTION

All schools can apply to the NCSE for Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support to assist with the additional and significant care needs that some students with disabilities may have. This can

include helping with activities such as toileting, dressing, feeding, medication and mobility. All students, particularly those with special educational needs, must be taught directly by a class teacher. It is not the role of the SNA to teach students, as SNAs are not qualified teachers. SNAs provide care support to children assessed as needing such assistance to attend school. They are a school-based resource and are usually shared with other children with care needs in the school.

They do not therefore act as a personal assistant to the individual child. As children grow and develop and become more independent, they may need less SNA support as they progress through school. Applications for special needs assistant support can be made where a student has: a significant medical need for care assistance; a significant impairment of physical or sensory function; or where the care needs specified relate to significant behavioural disturbance.

In the case of behavioural related care needs, SNA support is only provided where it is clear that the school's usual behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date. Schools must also demonstrate how access to SNA support can assist with ongoing planning and intervention for the student. SENOs allocate SNA support to the school, on a full time or part time basis, on the basis of individual applications and in accordance with current DES policy. The duties of the SNA are of a non-teaching nature. The school must arrange to use its SNA staff to meet the care needs of all the students who have been identified as needing assistance.

OBJECTIVES

The SNA helps children to develop independent living skills so that they are able to interact, as much as possible, with their classmates and peers. It is important that students do not become over dependent on adult SNA support. As children grow and develop and become more independent, they may need less SNA support as they progress through school.

TARGET GROUPS

SNAs provide care support to children assessed as needing such assistance to attend school.

WHEN

Applications for special needs assistant support can be made where a student has:

- a significant medical need for care assistance
- a significant impairment of physical or sensory function or
- where the care needs specified relate to significant behavioural disturbance. In the case of behavioural related care needs, SNA support is only provided where it is clear that the school's usual behavioural management strategies have not been successful to date.

HOW

When applying for SNA support, the school must send relevant professional reports which confirm that the child has a disability or medical needs; recommends additional adult support; and describes the nature and extent of the child's care needs. Schools are also asked to consider the importance of balancing the need of the child for necessary care support and the right of the child to acquire personal independence skills.

LINKS

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0030_2014.pdf

<https://ncse.ie/sna-allocations-201920>

<https://ncse.ie/for-schools>

- **learning events**

TITLE

National Council of Special Education Conference

DESCRIPTION

One of the NCSE's statutory roles is to carry out research in the area of special education. The overall aim of the NCSE research programme is to strengthen our knowledge and

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

understanding of best practice in educational policy and provision for students with special educational needs. Specifically, the NCSE research programme:

OBJECTIVES

To disseminate current research both nationally and internationally to effect change in pedagogy

TARGET GROUPS

All involved in Education

WHEN

November

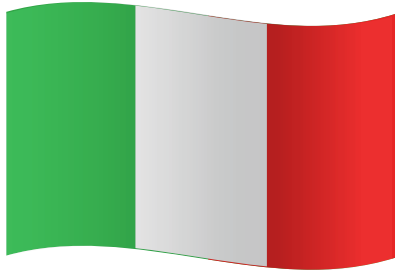
HOW

Annual Conference

LINK

<https://ncse.ie/research-conference>

chapter 3



Chapter 3
ITALY

ITALY

COUNTRY FACTS

In Italy, the National Laws 104/1992 and 170/2010, as well as the subsequent implementing regulations foresee an inclusive approach of all students with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream education: inclusive education in Italy is so required by law and fewer than 1% of all children with SEN are educated in segregated settings, due to severe disabilities.

In the Italian legislation, SEN students are intended as a macro-category of learners, including:

- learners with severe physical or intellectual impairments diagnosed by the local health units and according to the school integration policy (or Framework Law 104/1992);
- learners with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, certified by a public or private clinical diagnosis according to the Law 170/2010 – these ones are addressed by the MAGIC SENS project;
- learners with cultural, linguistic and socio-economic disadvantages.

Starting from Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Guidelines for SEN students right to study (2011), foresee a formal identification of "students at risk", on the basis of specific indicators and screening procedures.

The formal diagnosis of student with SEN is formulated only at the end of the second class of the primary school, when the child starts to learn systematically reading, writing and calculation: first, students at risk are identified, then specific activities at preventive/compensative level are realised. If difficulties persist, the school activates specific communication channel with the family and the family can request a medical evaluation.

The diagnosis is formulated by specialists or recognised/authorised structures (general public healthcare services and - if missing - private ones) which must have at disposal a multidisciplinary equip including Child Neuropsychiatrist, Psychologist, Speech Therapist and possibly other health professionals. The clinical diagnosis in Italy is allowed only to psychologists (L.56 / 89) and doctors.

At the end of the diagnostic procedure, the family communicates the evaluation results to the school and, if needed, specific didactic paths are implemented. These paths are described in the Personal Educational Plan, annually elaborated by including the educational and didactic interventions intended for the student, and by defining objectives, methods and evaluation criteria.

It is an integral part of the classroom educational and didactic programming and contains: a) educational goals and objectives and in particular the educational, socialization and learning objectives related to the different areas, formulated coherently with class planning; b) specific activities to be performed; c) the methods, materials, subsidies and technologies with which to organize the activities, including resources; d) evaluation criteria and methods; e) the forms of integration between school and outside-school activities. It is drawn up jointly by the school and the public services.

Several events are organised to disseminate best practices (consensus conference, workshops, trainings) which helps the professionals involved and also the parents to develop the skills and knowledges on these issues; moreover, different extra-curricular activities are realised in public and private structures to empower students with SEN in terms of self-esteem, motivation and independence.

Early identification of children at risk (preschool)

FORMAL DEFINITION OF "CHILDREN AT RISK"

TITLE

LEGGE 8 OTTOBRE 2010, N. 170 - NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO (New legislation about Specific Learners Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

The Italian law of 8 October 2010, n. 170, recognizes dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia as Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), assigning to the national education system the task of identifying the most appropriate teaching and assessment methods so that students with SLD can achieve educational success. Due to the peculiarity of the Specific Learning Disorders, the Law generally opens up an additional channel for safeguarding the right to education, specifically aimed at students with SLD, different from that provided for by law 104/1992 (Law for assistance, social integration and the rights of disabled people).

In fact, the right to study envisaged by the National Guidelines, published in 2011, focuses on individualized and personalized teaching, on compensatory tools, on dispensative measures and on adequate forms of verification and evaluation.

About formal identification of "children at risk", the Guidelines highlight that it is important to early identify possible learning difficulties and to recognize the risk signals already in early childhood and education.

The students with special needs will be than formally identified only in primary school, when the children will start to systematically learn reading, writing and calculation.

OBJECTIVES

- early identification of possible learning difficulties and risk signals already in early childhood and education, so as to start working on tailored activities within the group, based on child's competences.

TARGET GROUPS

- Children aged up to 5 attending nursery school.
- Educators/teachers, parents and/or caregivers

WHEN

During the nursery school (from 3 to 5 years old in Italian educational system).

HOW

On the basis of educators' daily work with children, it will be possible to monitor their perception, motor, linguistic, attentive and mnemonic skills.

So, it is foreseen a formal identification of "students at risk", on the basis of specific indicators:

- Inadequate recognition of sounds,
- formulation of incomplete sentences,
- use of words that are not appropriate to the context or replacement of them,
- omission of sounds or parts of words,
- replacement of sounds and letters,
- inadequate linguistic expression,
- inadequate skills in manual work,
- difficulty in recognition of right and left,
- difficulty with short-term memory tasks and in playing with words.

Children who show this kind of difficulties have to be supported with tailored activities within the group.

LINK

http://bes.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/linee_guida_sui_dsa_12luglio2011.pdf

SCREENING PROCEDURE / PROTOCOL FOR EDUCATORS

TITLE

LINEE GUIDA PER IL DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO DEGLI ALUNNI E DEGLI STUDENTI CON DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO (National Guidelines for SEN students right to study)

DESCRIPTION

The National Guidelines for SEN students right to study (2011) prescribe the identification of students at risk on the basis of specific screening procedures for each special educational need (dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia as recognised in the Italian law of 8 October 2010, n. 170).

OBJECTIVES

- evaluation of "students at risk" and subsequent activation of preventive measures and of tools for monitoring progresses and of processes, so as to assure didactic continuity with the primary school level.

TARGET GROUPS

- Children aged up to 5 attending nursery school.
- Educators/teachers, parents and/or caregivers.

WHEN

During the nursery school (from 3 to 5 years old in Italian educational system).

HOW

The Guidelines prescribe to educators to pay attention to children's learning processes, in order to allow the early identification of any difficult situations.

Specifically, systematic observation carried out with professionalism by the educator is essential, with specific reference to the monitoring of perceptive, motor, linguistic, attentional and mnemonic abilities.

During the nursery school, it is possible to identify problematic situations that can be expressed as difficulties in organization and integration, or to observe emerging global difficulties, ascribable to the Specific Learning Disorders, such as grapho-motor difficulties, orientation difficulties and spatio-temporal integration, difficulties in ocular-manual coordination and in general dynamic coordination, inadequately lateral dominance, difficulty in discrimination and sequential visual memorization, difficulty in orienting in school time, difficulties in the autonomous execution of daily activities, difficulties in self-orientation over time.

LINK

http://bes.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/linee_guida_sui_dsa_12luglio2011.pdf

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

TITLE

SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM DISADVANTAGED OR CULTURALLY DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

DESCRIPTION

Pre-school and kindergarten classrooms are among the earliest social environments that a child encounters outside the family. For young children with different cultural backgrounds and social disadvantages, this transition can be a challenging one. As such, it is important that programs are in place in early education institutions to facilitate the integration of such children with their peers and thereby promote social development across the board. However, many of the current educational systems do not do enough to address the needs of children who find the early school environment challenging as a result of learning disabilities or difficult backgrounds. Instead of being included, these children are often directed to separate schools or simply treated in a way that will only deepen their problems.

In this spirit, five partner organizations from four European countries: England, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Wales have teamed up to. The key idea behind this partnership was based on an

assumption, that instead of considering disadvantaged children to be an insurmountable challenge, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) practitioners must be familiar with effective and proper ways to integrate and address the individual needs of such children.

Project financed under ERASMUS+ KA2 Strategic partnership in School Education.

OBJECTIVES

- develop and implement innovative methodology of inclusive pre-school education to support children with special needs, especially those coming from socially disadvantaged or culturally different environments

TARGET GROUPS

- Early childhood education and care educators
- Children aged up to 5 attending nursery school.
- Parents and/or caregivers.

WHEN

Initial and continuous training of educators

HOW

The project activities were directly related to the achievement of project goals: enhancement of competences of pre-school staff and providing them with the methodological tools for effective support of pre-school children and parents from disadvantaged environments. The international cooperation provided an opportunity for the development of ECEC methodology based on the international survey illuminating the needs and experiences of pre-school teachers in partner countries. The methodology of inclusive pre-school education based on the methods of work implemented and evaluated by the partner organizations constitutes an important outcome of the project. It provides a summary of methods and tools, which could be used in various cultural environments to improve social and emotional skills of pre-school children. Furthermore, the comprehensive comparative report on the ECEC in partner countries was completed providing information on the similarities and differences in the education policies with regards to the pre-school education of children from disadvantaged environments

LINK

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2014-1-CZ01-KA201-001988>

Formal diagnosis process

SEN DIAGNOSIS

TITLE

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 "NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO" (New legislation about Specific Learners Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

The diagnosis for Specific Learning Disorders is regulated in the National Law 170/2010

SLD diagnosis is made as part of the specialist treatments already provided by the National Health Service under current legislation and is communicated by the family to the student's school. The regions in Italy where it is not possible to diagnose within the specialist treatment provided by the National Health Service may provide, within the limits of the human, instrumental and financial resources available, that the same diagnosis is carried out by accredited specialists or facilities.

OBJECTIVES

- promoting school success, also through didactic support measures, in order to

- guarantee an adequate training for developing the potential of each student;
- preparing teachers and raising parents' awareness about the problems related to learning difficulties;
- promoting early diagnosis and rehabilitation educational paths;
- increase communication and collaboration between family, school and health services during the education and training path;
- ensure equal opportunities for social and professional capacity building.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school students attending the first and second class.
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist)

WHEN

Primary school (at the end of the second class)

HOW

SEN diagnosis can be formulated at the end of the second class of the primary school. According to the National Law 170/2010, the school identifies students at risk, then specific activities at preventive/compensative level are realised. If difficulties persist, the school activates specific communication channel with the family and the family can request a medical evaluation. At the end of the diagnostic procedure, the family communicates the evaluation results to the school and, if needed, specific didactic paths are implemented (preventive/compensative or dispensatory level).

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

FORMAL AGREED PROCEDURES/PROTOCOLS FOR DIAGNOSIS

TITLE

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 "NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO" (New legislation about Specific Learners Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

The National Law 170/2010 and the subsequent implementing regulations foresee that SEN diagnosis is formulated by specialists or recognised/authorised structures (general public healthcare services and - if missing - private ones) in primary school. These services must have at disposal a multidisciplinary equip including Child Neuropsychiatrist, Psychologist, Speech Therapist and possibly other health professionals. The clinical diagnosis in Italy is allowed only to psychologists (L.56 / 89) and doctors.

OBJECTIVES

- Assure the correct procedures and the needed professionals to formulate a diagnosis for Special Learning Disorders.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school students attending the first and second class.
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist)

WHEN

Primary school (at the end of the second class)

HOW

In the first phase of the evaluation the general cognitive level and the reading, writing and calculation skills are detected. At this stage, the professionals involved are the psychologist and the speech therapist. In the second phase, the neuropsychiatrist will carry out specific investigations aimed

at considering the so-called exclusion factors, i.e. the presence of pathologies or sensory, neurological, cognitive abnormalities and serious psychopathologies. Following the evaluation, a clinical report will be prepared: the child's abilities will be described and the compensatory tools and dispensatory measures to be implemented in teaching will be presented.

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

TITLE

REGIONAL OPERATIVE PROGRAMME FOR SEN - PRO-DSA EMILIA ROMAGNA

DESCRIPTION

The document implements the national Guidelines at regional level providing specific procedures for diagnosis and taking into care, for the elaboration of a diagnostic-functional certification, for the cooperation processes in the definition of the Personalised Didactic Path, for the definition of enabling paths.

OBJECTIVES

- early identification of special educational needs;
- school Certification (for a more effective integration);
- promoting the use of compensatory supports;
- promoting joint actions among different institutions.

TARGET GROUPS

Primary school students attending the first and second class.

- Primary school students attending the first and second class.
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist).

WHEN

Primary school (at the end of the second class)

HOW

The programme defines the clinical and enabling pathway which, starting from reporting to the Neuropsychiatry Unit of childhood and adolescence (UONPIA), indicates times, methods and necessary resources for an appropriate diagnostic phase and the subsequent management; the latter must be aimed at providing the student, his/her family and the school with the necessary tools to become aware of the problem, to face it in the most appropriate way.

Specifically, the programme identifies:

- procedures for early identification of special educational needs, by developing a common protocol for the screening and to update teachers' and health operators' competences about;
- how to make a diagnosis by public health system (or accredited private services) and how to elaborate a personal didactic plan by the school, according to the diagnosis, within describing all the measures foreseen in the different disciplines and the monitoring tools/actions;
- compensative aids and the regional structures in charge of distributing them and providing technical assistance for their use to students and teachers;
- operating methods for the definition and / or the improvement of the relationships among health and educational institutions.

LINK

<http://bur.regione.emilia-romagna.it/area-bollettini/marzo-periodico-parte-seconda-1a-quindicina/programma-regionale-operativo-per-disturbi-specifici-di-apprendimento-pro-dsa-in-emilia-romagna>

EVIDENCE-BASED STANDARDIZED DIAGNOSIS TOOLS AVAILABLE TO SPECIALISTS

TITLE**REGIONAL OPERATIVE PROGRAMME FOR SEN - PRO-DSA EMILIA ROMAGNA****DESCRIPTION**

The Diagnostic protocol for SEN (2010), elaborated by the regional technical group of Emilia Romagna (Regional SEN group of public regional healthcare services) defines a diagnostic kit (basis one, in-depth kit) including specific tools for identifying and diagnosing specific SEN.

OBJECTIVES

- Sharing effective procedures and tools among specialists to guarantee the correct assessment and diagnosis of special educational needs.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school students attending the first and second class.
- Parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist)

WHEN

Primary school (at the end of the second class)

HOW

The minimum test kit, for the first two years of primary school, includes the following diagnosis tools (meta-phonological tests; proofs for reading evaluation; word dictation):

- WISC III is the foundation of a thorough assessment of a child with a learning difficulty. The interpretation of its scores provides suggestions for further confirmatory assessments and suggests the nature of educational interventions.
- Leiter Scale is a non-verbal test for the measurement of IQ and cognitive ability, particularly suitable for children and youngsters aged 2 to 20 years, with cognitive delay and with verbal disorders. Unlike traditional IQ tests, the Leiter Scale focuses on fluid intelligence and it's less influenced by linguistic, cultural, social or educational factors.
- Raven's Progressive Matrices is a nonverbal group test including 60 items used in measuring abstract reasoning and regarded as a non-verbal estimate of fluid intelligence. It is the most common and popular test administered to groups ranging from 5-year-olds to the elderly. In each test item, the subject is asked to identify the missing element that completes a pattern.
- Battery for the evaluation of developmental dyslexia and dysorthography (DDE-2) is used to assess reading speed and accuracy. These tasks provide a total of 4 scores (2 for accuracy and 2 for speed). Children are considered to perform poorly if they failed in at least one of four scores. Within this battery it is necessary to carry out reading and writing tests.
- MT reading test in order to verify individual reading competences of each student with reference to the class group and the normative data by age group: it allows to know the automatism level reached in the reading process (speed criterion) and, through the analysis of the error (type and frequency) allows to know the competence level.
- Battery for the evaluation of dysgraphia.

The in-depth kit consists of specific tests related to the abilities investigated:

- Language: - receptive and expressive (phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic level) - verbal memory - verbal fluency
- Visuo-spatial abilities: visuomotor integration tests and spatial memory tests; Rey figure;
- Attention and executive functions: Attention Italian Battery (BIA); Bell test (visual attention); evidence of sustained attention (Leiter), Tower of London;
- Other neuropsychological tests: Neuropsychological evaluation battery for developmental age (BVN).

LINK <https://www.ordpsicologier.it/public/genpags/biggs/LineeindirizzorERSavelli.pdf>

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SEN

TITLE

REGIONAL OPERATIVE PROGRAMME FOR SEN - PRO-DSA EMILIA ROMAGNA

DESCRIPTION

The Diagnostic protocol for SEN (2010) elaborated by the regional technical group of Emilia Romagna (Regional SEN group of public regional healthcare services) defines a specific methodology aimed at assessing SEN, considering that:

- in order to plan compensative or dispensatory intervention, the school needs a SEN certification;
- for obtaining a certification, this requests a diagnosis, with a nosographic classification and a functional qualification (including the different strengths and weaknesses in the various neurocognitive domains);
- on the basis of this documentation, the school has to elaborate a PERSONALISED DIDACTIC PLAN, where all the intervention adopted in the different subjects are described;
- the actual implementation is verified in specific meetings at school with parents, teachers and health operators.

OBJECTIVES

- Sharing effective procedures and tools among specialists to guarantee the correct assessment and diagnosis of special educational needs.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school students attending the first and second class.
- Parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist)

WHEN

Primary school (at the end of the second class)

HOW

The methodology starts from early identification at school which calls the family for requesting the consultation with specialists for diagnostic so as to activate health public services for a clinic evaluation. After having received the certification, the family delivers it to the school where the compensative or dispensatory interventions are implemented.

LINK

<https://www.ordpsicologier.it/public/genpags/bigs/LineeindirizzorERSavelli.pdf>

EVENTS TO DISSEMINATE BEST PRACTICES

TITLE

Conferenza DOVE TUTTO HA INIZIO (Conference WHERE IT ALL BEGINS)

DESCRIPTION

AID – Italian Dyslexia Association is the national organisation more committed to plan and organise events to disseminate best practices linked to diagnosis and support of SEN students, together with local and regional organisations/associations.

The conference DOVE TUTTO HA INIZIO (Where it all begins), realised in 2017, disseminated the results of observation and intervention of students in ECEC in view of entering primary school, coherently with the application of Legislative Decree n. 65/2017 - Integrated system 0 - 6 years.

Supported by experts in early childhood education and care, the "Mameli-Magnini" Comprehensive Institute, in collaboration with Centro F.A.R.E. - Formazione Abilitazione Ricerca Educazione, InformalMente Association and AID-Italian Dyslexia Association, proposes a training articulated in different modules stressing the importance of observation and early intervention in kindergarten and

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

transition to primary school (discovery of reading-writing, basic metaphonological competences, childhood emotional and behavioural aspects).

OBJECTIVES

- Acquiring competences about observation and intervention in ECEC in view of entering primary school, coherently with the application of Legislative Decree n. 65/2017 - Integrated system 0 - 6 years.

TARGET GROUPS

- ECEC and primary school teachers/educators, university students.
- Parents or caregivers, public healthcare services

WHEN

Early childhood education and care, primary school (first two classes)

HOW

- In-presence workshops
- Online training (theoretical / practical material to be consulted, presentation of the observation grid to be used in the classroom, final questionnaire to verify the effectiveness of the materials)
- Didactic experimentation and action research in the classroom (observations of the children through the provided grid)
- Forum for final discussion of on-site observations

LINK

<http://www.centrofare.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CONVEGNO-Infanzia-24-luglio-2017.pdf>

Legislation in place for SEN (rights and recognition)

SPECIFIC LAW/S AND/OR REGULATIONS ABOUT SEN (INCLUDING AUTISM, ADHD, DYSLLEXIA ETC.) AND EDUCATION

TITLE

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 "NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO" (New legislation about Specific Learning Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

The Italian law of 8 October 2010, n. 170, recognizes dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia as Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), assigning to the national education system the task of identifying the most appropriate teaching and assessment methods so that students with SLD can achieve educational success. Due to the peculiarity of the Specific Learning Disorders, the Law generally opens up an additional channel for safeguarding the right to education, specifically aimed at students with SLD, different from that provided for by law 104/1992 (Law for assistance, social integration and the rights of disabled people).

OBJECTIVES

- Guaranteeing the right to education;
- Promoting scholastic success, also through didactic support measures, assuring an adequate training and promoting the development of students' potential;
- Reducing relational and emotional problems;
- Adopting forms of monitoring and evaluation appropriate to the training needs of the students;
- Training teachers and making parents aware of issues related to learning difficulties;
 - Favouring early diagnosis and rehabilitative educational paths;
 - Increasing communication and cooperation between family, school and health services during education and training paths;

- Ensuring equal opportunities for social and professional capacity building.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

The Law defines:

- the different Specific Learning Disorders (dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia)
- the competence of public health services in diagnosis and the measure to be taken in school
- the training on early detection of SLD and on inclusive didactics to be assured to teachers at all school levels;
- the main supporting educative and didactic measures to be adopted in school
- the measures addressed to families.

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

TITLE

LINEE GUIDA PER IL DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO DEGLI ALUNNI E DEGLI STUDENTI CON DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO (National Guidelines for SEN students right to study)

DESCRIPTION

The implementing Decree of the Law n. 170/2010, published in 2011, explains training modalities for teachers' and school managers' training, the educational and didactical measures for supporting the correct teaching and learning process starting from ECEC, as well as the methodologies for verification and evaluation aimed at guaranteeing the right to education to BES student, at all school levels and at University.

The Decree includes also the LINEE GUIDA PER IL DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO DEGLI ALUNNI E DEGLI STUDENTI CON DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO (National Guidelines for SEN students' right to study).

OBJECTIVES

- Guaranteeing the right to education;
- Promoting scholastic success, also through didactic support measures, assuring an adequate training and promoting the development of students' potential;
- Reducing relational and emotional problems;
- Adopting forms of monitoring and evaluation appropriate to the training needs of the students;
- Training teachers and making parents aware of issues related to learning difficulties;
- Favouring early diagnosis and rehabilitative educational paths;
- Increasing communication and cooperation between family, school and health services during education and training paths;
- Ensuring equal opportunities for social and professional capacity building.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

All education levels

HOW

The Guidelines present some indications, elaborated on the basis of the most recent scientific knowledge (2011), to realize individualized and personalized didactic interventions, as well as to use compensatory tools and to apply dispensatory measures. The Guidelines indicate the minimum requirements of the services offered by educational institutions and universities to guarantee the right to study for pupils and students with learning disabilities.

The document presents the description of the Specific Learning Disorders, widen some pedagogical-didactic concepts connected to them and illustrates the evaluation methods for the right to study of pupils and students with learning disabilities in schools and universities. A chapter is then dedicated to the tasks and roles to be performed by the different actors involved in the inclusion process of students and students with SLD: regional school offices, educational institutions (managers, teachers, pupils and students), families, universities. The last one is dedicated to training for teachers and school staff.

The Guidelines explains training modalities for teachers' and school managers' training, the educational and didactical measures for supporting the correct teaching and learning process starting from ECEC, as well as the methodologies for verification and evaluation aimed at guaranteeing the right to education to BES student, at all school levels and at University.

LINK

http://bes.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/linee_guida_sui_dsa_12luglio2011.pdf

TITLE

DIRETTIVA 27/12/2012 STRUMENTI D'INTERVENTO PER ALUNNI CON BISOGNI EDUCATIVI SPECIALI E ORGANIZZAZIONE TERRITORIALE PER L'INCLUSIONE SCOLASTICA (intervention tools for pupils with special educational needs and territorial organization for school inclusion)

DESCRIPTION

The Ministerial Directive STRUMENTI D'INTERVENTO PER ALUNNI CON BISOGNI EDUCATIVI SPECIALI E ORGANIZZAZIONE TERRITORIALE PER L'INCLUSIONE SCOLASTICA (Intervention tools addressed to SEN students and territorial organisation for social inclusion), published in 2012, outlines and specifies the inclusive strategy of the Italian School in order to fully achieve the right to study for all pupils and students in need.

OBJECTIVES

- Enhanced the culture of inclusion;
- Deepening of school teachers' with reference to inclusive didactics
- Support a closer interaction among all the actors of the educating community.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

The Directive redefines and completes the traditional approach to inclusive education, based on disability certification, extending the field of intervention and of responsibility of the whole educating community to the area of Special Educational Needs, including: social and cultural disadvantage, specific learning disorders and / or specific developmental disorders, difficulties deriving from the lack of knowledge of Italian culture and language. Therefore, the Directive extends the right to personalization of the learning process to all students in needs, expressly referring to the principles set forth in Law 53/2003.

LINK

<http://bes.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Direttiva-ministeriale-27.12.12.pdf>

FORMAL DEFINITION OF SEN

TITLE

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 "NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO" (New legislation about Specific Learning Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

The Law includes in SEN students:

- a) the ones with psychophysics, sensorial or motor disabilities and autism;
- b) the ones with specific developmental disorders (speech and language, scholastic skills, motor function, nonverbal, dyspraxia, mild autism spectrum, attention disorder and mild hyperactivity, limiting cognitive functioning, oppositional defiant disorder);
- c) the disadvantaged ones (social, economic linguistic, cultural obstacles; behavioural/relational discomforts; illnesses, addictions).

The Law n. 170/2010 is complementary to Law 104/1992 LEGGE QUADRO PER L'ASSISTENZA, L'INTEGRAZIONE SOCIALE E I DIRITTI DELLE PERSONE HANDICAPPATE (Framework Law for assistance, social integration and the rights of people with disabilities) which disciplines the assistance, social inclusions and rights of people with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognizing dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia as Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), assigning to the national education system the task of identifying the most appropriate teaching and assessment methods so that students with SLD can achieve educational success.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

The Law defines:

- the different Specific Learning Disorders (dyslexia, dysorthography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia)
- the competence of public health services in diagnosis and the measure to be taken in school
- the training on early detection of SLD and on inclusive didactics to be assured to teachers at all school levels;
- the main supporting educative and didactic measures to be adopted in school
- the measures addressed to families.

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

Early intervention programs

SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE SYSTEM

TITLE

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 "NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO"

DESCRIPTION

SEN students (intended in this context as the ones affected by specific learning disabilities occurring in presence of adequate cognitive abilities, in absence of neurological pathologies and sensory deficits) don't have the right to have at disposal specialists other than their teachers. The right to have at disposal a specialist is recognised only to students with disabilities.

Thanks to one-shot initiatives co-financed at local, national and European level, specialists from private organisations can be put at disposal of the class to make the didactic activities more friendly and effective with reference to SEN, in particular with reference to training for trainers and didactic innovation.

OBJECTIVES

- Defining actors and measures to support inclusive didactics with reference to students with specific learning disabilities.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

Curricular teachers are called to plan and implement specific compensative and dispensatory measures allowing student with specific learning disorders to participate in didactic activities with the whole class: this in order to promote a more inclusive educational and didactic model..

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPLEMENTATION

TITLE

LINEE GUIDA PER IL DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO DEGLI ALUNNI E DEGLI STUDENTI CON DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO (National Guidelines for SEN students right to study)

DESCRIPTION

The Personal Educational Plan (PEP) describes annually the educational and didactic interventions intended for the student, defining objectives, methods and evaluation criteria. It is an integral part of the classroom educational and didactic programming.

OBJECTIVES

- Defining educational goals and objectives and in particular the educational, socialization and

- learning objectives related to the different areas, formulated coherently with class planning;
- Indicating specific activities to be performed;
- Defining the methods, materials, subsidies and technologies with which to organize the activities, including resources;
- Settling evaluation criteria and methods;
- Indicating the forms of integration between school and outside-school activities.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

Personal Educational Plan (PEP) is drawn up jointly by the school and the public services (Psycho-Socio-Sanitary Team) with the cooperation of the family. So, school staff (headmasters, teachers and auxiliary staff), public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist), families are involved in the development and implementation process.

LINK

http://bes.indire.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/linee_guida_sui_dsa_12luglio2011.pdf

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS ARE PROMOTED THROUGH FORMAL EVENTS

TITLE

TRAINING ON LEARNING DISABILITIES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

DESCRIPTION

The project developed new strategies that help teachers and parents to learn about how pupils and children with learning difficulties could enhance results in primary and secondary school, to organize innovative trainings for teachers and parents and, finally, to create some new tools and materials for all of them and for other school advisers and educational leaders.

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for School Education with ES Coordinator and IT partner - 2015-2017

OBJECTIVES

- Analysing how teachers and parents, until now, dealt with learning disabilities, in order to find innovative solutions to emerging needs;
- Improving teachers' competences by developing new teaching methodologies that allow them to teach to pupils with learning disabilities;
- Enhancing the use of ICT in the educational context – by teachers and parents-in order to help them to let pupils express their potential;
- Increasing teachers' motivation with reference to inclusive didactics;
- Giving parents a better support about how to deal with children with learning disabilities, training them about new learning strategies and ICT tools.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers

WHEN

Primary school

HOW

The project provided:

- a) original videogames to help pupils with learning difficulties to learn better and to work the executive functions recommended to each kind of disease;
- b) methodological guide with good practices in the teaching-learning process to help these pupils to learn better, with a Glossary term guide to allow to teachers and parents not used to work with ICT tools to understand well this kind of materials.

The partnership foresaw also to promote the main activities and results through specific Multiplier Events open to direct and indirect target groups.

LINK

<http://www.helpdeskinId.com/index.php/it/>

SPECIALISTS USE EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS**TITLE**

PLAY2DO

DESCRIPTION

The impact of the project has been the introduction of an integrative and motivating VET framework designed for students with SEN and their educators/trainers, using a 3D game platform for supporting practice learning using qualities of Emotional Artificial Intelligence and Adaptivity.

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for School Education with UK Coordinator and IT partner - 2016-2018

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting special education teachers, mainstream teachers, and VET trainers who work with students/trainees with intellectual disabilities by offering an educational game for teachers to complement their training through simulated practice learning and improve their skills in dealing with critical incidents or challenging situations which can occur in everyday practice.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school students with intellectual disabilities
- Special education teachers, mainstream teachers, and VET trainers who work with students/trainees with intellectual disabilities

WHEN

Secondary school

HOW

The project developed pedagogy for trainers/mentors about the use of the simulated practice learning environment and delivered a curriculum about simulated practice learning. The project trained 200 trainers/mentors to use the environment and carried out a large-scale European pilot with over 300 VET/school students with SEN and trainers/mentors/special education teachers using the environment and the new curriculum that accompanies it.

LINK

<http://play2do.eu/it/about-it/>

EFFICIENCY OF INTERVENTION IS SYSTEMATICALLY MONITORED AND PROGRAMS ADJUSTED

TITLE

LA SCUOLA PER TUTTI

DESCRIPTION

The National legislation and the implementing regulation state that Personal Educational Plan - PEP is elaborated at the beginning of each school year and its implementation is evaluated. Since the evaluation of pupils with SEN refers mainly to the PEP, both in terms of objectives and methods and verification criteria, this document must clearly contain all the elements that will then allow to effectively evaluating the results of the didactic action.

The project LA SCUOLA PER TUTTI (A school for everyone - since 2004 up to date) realised by Centro F.A.R.E. and **AID – Italian Dyslexia Association** supports teachers with reference to monitoring tasks.

OBJECTIVES

- Monitoring the learning process of reading and writing of all children in the early stages of learning; to organize support activities for learning skills related in particular to the alphabetical phase;
- Providing teachers with knowledge about learning processes and tools for facing difficulties, which can be addressed to the whole class.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers

WHEN

First class of primary school cycle

HOW

administer tests, both in terms of instrumentation and with reference to the use of specialized resources; these features make it easy to replicate the projects over the years.

Tests are administrated at the beginning of the school year so as to allow the teachers to have more information about the characteristics of the children and consequently have the possibility to adapt the teaching methodology in good time, then quarterly so as to monitor children's progress.

LINK

<http://icumbertidemontonepietralunga.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Progetto-Screening-1.pdf>

Accommodation, modification and support in educational place

"SEN FRIENDLY" CLASS IN THE SCHOOL

TITLE

VADEMECUM PER I DOCENTI CHE INSEGNANO IN CLASSI IN CUI SONO PRESENTI STUDENTI CON BISOGNI EDUCATIVI SPECIALI (Guidelines for SEN didactics)

DESCRIPTION

Many schools put in place specific arrangements to facilitate learning of SEN students, as well as to let them feeling comfortable in school environment.

The Secondary School "Marzotto-Luzzatti" in Valdagno (VI) elaborated specific guidelines in 2017, providing dispensatory tools for making the class "SEN-friendly".

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with Special Educational Needs students', providing essential information and guidelines.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

In secondary school.

HOW

The main dispensatory tools foreseen in the document are the following:

- do not read aloud in class (unless explicitly requested by the child) so as not to create discomfort in front of classmates;
- do not write fast under dictation (difficulty in comprehend the text because it does not understand what he has written or forgets about the parts);
- do not write on the board, do not copy from the blackboard, do not copy texts or exercises in tests, exercises and homework, do not copy technical drawings, do not write and read Roman numerals;
- do not study learn by heart, for example poems, grammatical rules, definitions, scoreboard, dates;
- do not use dictionaries;
- do assign homework to a reduced extent and adapt it to the possibilities of the pupil;
- do foresee the possibility of use adapted texts, not for content, but for quantity of pages and characteristics of the font;
- do programme longer times for written tests and home study;
- do scheduled oral texts.

LINK

https://www.iisvaldagno.it/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Vademecum-per-docenti-ITI_Marzotto-alunni-BES.pdf

IN-CLASS SUPPORT

TITLE

PLAY2DO

DESCRIPTION

The impact of the project has been the introduction of an integrative and motivating VET framework designed for students with SEN and their educators/trainers, using a 3D game platform for supporting practice learning using qualities of Emotional Artificial Intelligence and Adaptivity.

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for School Education with UK Coordinator and IT partner - 2016-2018

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting special education teachers, mainstream teachers, and VET trainers who work with students/trainees with intellectual disabilities by offering an educational game for teachers to complement their training through simulated practice learning and improve their skills in dealing with critical incidents or challenging situations which can occur in everyday practice.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school students with intellectual disabilities
- Special education teachers, mainstream teachers, and VET trainers who work with students/trainees with intellectual disabilities

WHEN

Secondary school

HOW

The project developed pedagogy for trainers/mentors about the use of the simulated practice learning environment and delivered a curriculum about simulated practice learning. The project trained 200 trainers/mentors to use the environment and carried out a large-scale European pilot with over 300 VET/school students with SEN and trainers/mentors/special education teachers using the environment and the new curriculum that accompanies it.

LINK

<http://play2do.eu/it/about-it/>

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT**TITLE**

VADEMECUM PER I DOCENTI CHE INSEGNANO IN CLASSI IN CUI SONO PRESENTI STUDENTI CON BISOGNI EDUCATIVI SPECIALI (Guidelines for SEN didactics)

DESCRIPTION

Many schools put in place specific arrangements to facilitate learning of SEN students, as well as to let them feeling comfortable in school environment.

The Secondary School “Marzotto-Luzzatti” in Valdagno (VI) elaborated specific guidelines in 2017, providing dispensatory tools for making the class "SEN-friendly".

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with Special Educational Needs students', providing essential information and guidelines.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

In secondary school.

HOW

The main compensative tools for individual support foreseen in the document are the following:

- digital textbooks (PDF);
- recorded audio and video resources (MP3-DVD-CDrom-online);
- measurement tables, geometric, physical, chemical, mathematical formulas; calculator;
- recorder (the teacher will indicate the essential part of the lesson to be recorded);
- geographical and historical maps, computer with word processing programs with spell checker and possibly speech synthesis, electronic dictionaries, translators and multimedia encyclopaedias;
- audio-visuels; electronic dictionaries; use of keywords; forms of geometry, algebra, tables of numbers and measures, use of concept maps, flow charts, diagrams and lesson summaries.

LINK

https://www.iisvaldagno.it/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Vademecum-per-docenti-ITI_Marzotto-alunni-BES.pdf

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING ASSISTANT**TITLE**

LEGGE N. 170 DELL'8 OTTOBRE 2010 “NUOVE NORME IN MATERIA DI DISTURBI SPECIFICI DI APPRENDIMENTO IN AMBITO SCOLASTICO” (New legislation about Specific Learning Disorders in School Education)

DESCRIPTION

SEN students (intended in this context as the ones affected by specific learning disabilities occurring in presence of adequate cognitive abilities, in absence of neurological pathologies and sensory deficits) don't have the right to have at disposal specialists other than their teachers. The right to have at disposal a specialist is recognised only to students with disabilities.

According to reference legislation, for specific cases the need for individual teaching assistant can be evaluated (i.e. in the event of comorbidity or language disorders).

OBJECTIVES

- Defining actors and measures to support inclusive didactics with reference to students with specific learning disabilities.

TARGET GROUPS

- Students with Specific Learning Disorders
- Educators/teachers, school managers, parents or caregivers, public healthcare services (neuropsychiatrist, psychologist, speech therapist) and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Offices)

WHEN

Primary and secondary schools (students aged 6 to 18 years old)

HOW

Curricular teachers are called to plan and implement specific compensative and dispensatory measures allowing student with specific learning disorders to participate in didactic activities with the whole class: this in order to promote a more inclusive educational and didactic model.

LINK

https://www.aiditalia.org/Media/Documents/legge170_10.pdf

Learning & Development opportunities for SEN children (outside school)

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS/ LINK

TITLE

LEGGO ANCH'IO

DESCRIPTION

The **LEGGO ANCH'IO** project (I read too - 2010) realised specific activities in computer labs with the use of compensatory technologies as after-school programs.

The project has been promoted by **AID - Associazione Italiana Dislessia** and **Centro F.A.R.E.**

OBJECTIVES

- Increasing the motivation to the study of dyslexic young people.

TARGET GROUPS

Children and youngsters aged 6 to 18

WHEN

Primary and secondary school

HOW

Labs have been implemented within the Public Libraries of the Municipality of Perugia for 100h training in total by creating stimulating learning environments focused on enhancing the potential of the students.

LINK

<http://www.centrofare.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CONVEGNO-Infanzia-24-luglio-2017.pdf>

HOMEWORK ASSISTANT TOOLS FOR PARENTS/ LINK**TITLE**

AMICO TUTOR

DESCRIPTION

The project was promoted in 2018 by Coop FamigliaAmici in cooperation with **Associazione Italiana Dislessia Umbria, Centro F.A.R.E., Menteglocale Aps, InformalMente Aps** in order to answer the need for supporting families in extra-school study for children and youngsters aged 6 to 18. The project offered personalized courses which take into account the characteristics of each student.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting families in extra-school study for children and youngsters aged 6 to 18.

TARGET GROUPS

Children and youngsters aged 6 to 18

WHEN

Primary and secondary school

HOW

The project activities have been realised in Perugia and included:

- a) the publication of illustrative material for extensive information,
- b) the creation of a web space where to find information, answers to frequently asked questions, tutorials for the use of software, compensatory tools and voice synthesis so as to allow everyone to access it, in-depth information on school regulations and strategies for study organization,
- c) workshops "How to study?" addressed to primary and secondary school students. The students became familiar with compensatory technologies, such as speech synthesis for reading, and software for the realization of mental and conceptual maps useful to make more accessible study contents and favouring memorisation.

LINK

http://www.amicotutor1.altervista.org/Leggo_anch_io.html

LEARNING EVENTS**TITLE**

SUMMER CAMPS

DESCRIPTION

Summer camps organised in 2017 by **Centro F.A.R.E.** and **AID – Italian Dyslexia Association** are specific occasions for meeting and discussion organized for children and youngsters, aimed at individual and cognitive growth of individuals through play and fun. Starting from basic objectives, such as bringing participants closer to alternative reading and writing strategies through the use of IT compensatory tools to be used for general study, or providing the opportunity to learn new techniques that can help them in the organization of their knowledge, the team of experts and lecturers allow the group to study school subjects, improving both the written and oral exposition. Summer camps represent a significant and innovative experience, to allow young people to become independent in the contemporary social context.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

OBJECTIVES

- supporting individual and cognitive growth of individuals through play and fun;
- bringing participants closer to alternative reading and writing strategies through the use of IT compensatory tools;
- letting children and youngsters acquire new techniques that can help them in the organization of their knowledge.

TARGET GROUPS

Primary and secondary school students

WHEN

Primary and secondary school

HOW

The Campus @pprendo is addressed to secondary school students. It last 6 days and each participant is guided in learning and in exploiting compensative strategies and tools. The proposed paths are able to stimulate the autonomy through the use of technics and ICT tools, improving motivation, self-esteem and self-acceptance. During the Campus, free software are demonstrated and used, as well as installed in students' computers.

The Campus "Si può Fare" - residential and non-residential ones – is addressed to children and teenagers who want to live a fun and engaging experience. The activities carried out aim to stimulate the self-esteem of the participants and the self-acceptance thanks to teamwork and recreational activities. The courses offered are carried out by experienced teachers and tutors who allow students to approach specific contents in a fun way. Particular attention is given to boys and girls with learning difficulties, dyslexia and other SEN.

LINK

<http://www.centrofare.it/campus-estivi/>

Review

TITLE

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

DESCRIPTION

In the secondary school I.I.S. Polo - Bonghi (Santa Maria degli Angeli - PG), a new practice providing the cooperation between support teacher, curricular teachers and students has been implemented, in order to improve the evaluation of students' progresses.

The practice has been implemented in a class with two students with Specific learning Disorders and 8 students with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

- Avoiding the evaluation to be too much affected by the different individual needs;
- Strengthening the cohesion among students
- Improving cooperation between support teacher and curricular teachers.

TARGET GROUPS

Secondary school students aged 14 to 18.

WHEN

Secondary school

HOW

A role reversal between subject teachers and support teacher has been experimented (curricular teachers acting as support of children with disabilities or specific learning disorders, while support teachers working with the whole class with reference to the different disciplines); moreover the work

done by the support teacher (i.e. lesson notes, summaries, maps) has been made available to everyone in the class so that all students (SEN or not) had at disposal the same tools and resources. This way the evaluation process and criteria have been less affected by the differences between individual needs.

LINK

<http://www.istitutopolo-bonghi.it/>

TITLE**ACTIVITIES FOR SKILLS ENHANCEMENT IN MATHEMATICS****DESCRIPTION**

The practice allowed the realisation of targeted activities for students with Specific learning Disorders with reference to Mathematics.

Secondary school I.I.S. G. Bruno (Perugia)

OBJECTIVES

- Improving students' performance in Mathematics;
- increasing students' awareness about their know-how and abilities about specific exercises;
- sharing in the group of peers the strengths and the weaknesses of each student so to strengthen self esteem.

TARGET GROUPS

Secondary school students aged 14 to 18.

WHEN

Secondary school

HOW

Given a math exercise, students must be able to explain what they are not able to do, so as to shift their attention from the exercise to the problems they meet. Bringing together so many different difficulties in the group of peers make children look for "complementarities within the difficulty" (increasing the awareness of their know-how on specific exercises).

LINK

<http://www.giordanobrunoperugia.gov.it/>

TITLE**SELF-REFLECTION IN EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE – SEQUENCES PROJECT****DESCRIPTION**

The EU project **SEQUENCES - Self and external Evaluation of Quality in Europe to Nourish Childhood Education Services** (ERASMUS+ KA2 project for School Education coordinated by FORMA.Azione srl) allowed to study a best practice linked to the establishment by Childhood educators of meetings for self-reflection to share children's progress and educational strategies.

OBJECTIVES

- Helping teachers to reflect on the quality of relationships with and amongst students and the current didactic methodologies, practices and tools they adopted;
- Motivating school staff to reflect on their practice and evaluate how they support students with specific learning disorders to progress in terms of competences

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

- and well-being
- Helping teachers to identify and negotiate actions for further improving didactics.

TARGET GROUPS

Secondary school teachers

WHEN

Secondary school

HOW

It can be possible to institutionalize meetings for self-reflection to share children's progress and educational strategies also in secondary schools to share time together, talk and overcome the competition among teachers, also in light of the fact that in primary schools are foreseen 2 hours of programming that teachers use even just to talk and exchange experiences, without doing mandatorily something with a specific purpose.

LINK

<https://sequences-project.eu/>

chapter 4



Chapter 4 ROMANIA

ROMANIA

COUNTRY FACTS

E

ducation of children and adolescents with special educational needs (SEN) enrolled in the pre-primary (ECE), primary, lower secondary, upper secondary or high school is running in Romania according with Article 58 of the *Romanian Constitution*. Romanian education policy on the inclusion of special education needs pupils in mainstream schools started to implement in the 1990s concomitant with improving the life of children in special schools.

The Education Law issued in 1995 (the first one after 1989) had a whole chapter dedicated to special education, introducing the concepts of *special education needs - SEN and integrated education*, based on the educational needs of children with disabilities in *special schools, special classes* integrated in mainstream schools and *individual integration* in ordinary classes.

In 1997 in the Teacher Statute Law has been introduced the professional figure of the *itinerant teacher*, with the intention to support the children with special educational needs integrated in mainstream schools. Later, *The Government Decision no. 1251 from 2005 on special education issues* stipulated the terms and measures of organizing an *Inclusive Education System*, based on the special integrated education concepts. This concept is based on the experience with special schools, trying to translate this experience into the mainstream schools, starting from the concept “services following the student”.

The Education Law no.1/2011 (on-going, republished with further adjustments), extended the structures to support this inclusive education system, creating county resource centers for educational assistance (one center CJRAE for each county and one center CMBRAE for Bucharest). The integration of SEN students in ordinary classes and schools continued. The CJRAE and CMBRAE offered speech therapy and school counselling for SEN students from public schools (private schools are excluded) in urban area (rural area is totally excluded). Other services will be remained mostly in special schools (the itinerant teacher), or in former special schools transformed in so called “school centers for inclusive education”.

The mixture between special school system and the integrated special education created huge confusion between any type of SEN (for instance dyslexia) and general disability (handicap) that used to be addressed in special schools before 1989.

The integration of children with SEN can be considered more a physical integration than a real one, as support services are either insufficient or inadequate and inefficient for all categories of actors in education system:

- children with SEN and their families;
- teachers;
- school management and school administration (local authorities);
- children and families of children in the regular schools.

Still the system becomes every day more and more open and new regulation came to fulfil missing provisions for each different type of educational need.

In public education this system regarding special education schools for different types of disabilities is implemented and in parallel it's tried it an individual integration of students with disabilities/ SEN in mainstream schools. The integration of special education classes in ordinary schools failed and there are only a few exceptions.

In private education system are some examples of best practice. For example, there is a practicing school - CONIL, with a total inclusion, with teachers and support educators, in ordinary classes for SEN and non-SEN students.

in respect to this reality, we cannot speak now about a SYSTEM, structured and well established for an appropriate approach on SEN issues in ordinary schools.

The teachers are aware about the Romanian education policy on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools and all have experienced this inclusion in their professional activity. However, there are different understandings and perceptions of it, and the main observation is that the one-site situation is very different in relation with the national education policy legally established.

The fact is that Romania has not a structured strategy, in order to make the connection between the values promoted by the Law of National Education (and all the further official decisions regarding SEN), and current practices.

That's why the school is facing the obligation to apply the measures related with the inclusion established by the national education policy, without having the means to correspond to these demands.

The teachers in mainstream schools (including the managers) feel the pressure from different parts:

- *The pressure of the parents of pupils with SEN*, as they consider the integration into mainstream school as a chance for a better social inclusion of their children. The laws insist on ensuring equal rights to education, all children, no matter their difficulties or special situations, can be integrate in mainstream schools. The teachers consider this integration as a pressure as they find themselves without any support in front of the continuously growing number of SEN cases they are not prepared to receive in their classes with an appropriate educational addressing.
- *The pressure of authorities/ ministry* etc, who insist on increasing the quality of education for all pupils, but the evaluation of teacher's professional performance is based only on the results on national exams, school competitions, Olympics, involvement in projects or other activities etc. There are no adjustments based on the specific issues related with SEN, except the new regulation called "PROCEDURA" for national exams (2019), too recent to be a reference.
- *The pressure of other parents*, the parents of "normal" students, who criticize teachers and the school management for the presence of certain SEN pupils that, they consider, are "disturbing" the class activity and take from the time from dedicated by teacher to the children, in order to integrate those with SEN. The pressure exists on managers too, as they have difficulties to identify solutions so that their schools can be considered by the entire community as inclusive as well as performing or "elite school". Mentioning that the actual perception on the quality of education provided by a school is based on the good results obtained by students at different competitions and national exams.

Another aspect mentioned by teachers refers to the children that have proven learning difficulties and they are not identified as SEN, because of the parents who refuse to accept the situation and do not let their children to be evaluated in order to have a more detailed information about their difficulties and eventually special educational needs.

On the other side, the parents feel not secure to certificate the eventual special needs of their children, as they also have the pressure of the mistreating of the real problem, without any professional support in class (the itinerant teachers who can provide support in classrooms is not sufficient because of lack of those persons; in general only the main towns benefit of such special teachers, and the time they can allocate for each case is no more than 2 hours per week). The parents feel also, the same as the teachers, a pressure coming from the parents of "normal" students.

In Romania are registered good practice examples, as the cases of SEN (TSI) students are certified, correct diagnosis, with very good family support.

Depending on their personal approach, some teachers are using different methods during their learning procedure as:

- reducing the tasks,
- oral examination instead of written,
- personal support for class assignments,
- support classmate close to SEN student,
- alternative reading learning methods for elementary school,
- Inovative methods (playing and learning) and friendly approach for all students, very effective for TSI students,
- concept maps (growing interest for mind mapping as learning method for all students and very effective as evaluation method for TSI students),

- digital tools (visual learning with video presentations, digital manuals, corrective soft – Romanian version of OneNote, reading soft – English, etc).

There are very different approaches regarding the relationship between teachers and students (and their family). Our on-site observation has been done in selected classes where teachers have a certain training and are aware about the special needs as TSI and about different ways to approach such needs. Nevertheless, there are very different signals coming from both sides, teachers and students (families), each side (!) claiming that it is still a lot to do for a real inclusive school. Even in the same school, same student can face different experiences depending on his/her higher skills for certain domains or based on the individual capacity of teachers to adapt their learning procedure to his needs.



The main problem is related to the lack of training about SEN and more specific on TSI. One of the main observations is that teachers **NEED** know-how and the support of school management, authorities and parents to really fulfill this goal. In this respect the training should include mixt teams – teachers and school headmasters and, if it is possible school counselors and support/ itinerant teachers.

As consequence, we decided to include below a Mind Mapping Toolkit for “SEN-friendly” Classroom elaborated by Carmen DRAGOMIR, Expert mintebri.ro.

INTRODUCTION IN MIND MAPPING TOOLKIT FOR “SEN-FRIENDLY” CLASSROOM

The toolkit is designed to support primary and secondary school teachers from Romania who wish to gain basics skills for teaching pupils with SEN. The intent of this toolkit is to be a resource that will increase their capacity to ensure the success of the diverse group of learners in their classrooms, with focus on SEN pupils.

For the purpose of this project, we consider to focus on specific SEN - Special Educational Needs, the non-normative difficulties and specifically those one that can be approached directly by teachers, with appropriate training and tools:

- **dyslexia** (reading disorder);
- **dysgraphia and dysorthography** (writing disorder);
- **dyscalculia** (calculation disorder).

The degree of difficulty a child with reading, writing and/or calculation disorder varies from person to person due to inherited differences in brain development, as well as the type of teaching the person receives. The brain is normal, often very “intelligent,” but with strengths in areas other than the language and numeracy area.

This “difference” goes undetected until the person finds difficulty when learning to read, write and count. Everyone with reading, writing and/or calculation disorder is unique, but the mind mapping approach is flexible enough to serve a wide range of ages and learning differences. A mind mapping approach can be valuable to many; to the dyslexic child it is essential. The expertise of the teacher is the key.

THE TOOLKIT

The materials (pdf) consist of a variety of mind mapping tools to support primary and secondary school teachers, each of which focuses on:

- **AREA 1:** dyslexia pupils' strengths and weaknesses,
- **AREA 2:** SEN-friendly classroom,
- **AREA 3:** accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities
- **AREA 4:** accommodation involving mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students' performance.

AREA 1: DYSLEXIA STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Dyslexia Strengths (+)	Dyslexia Weaknesses (-)
1.1. Logical thinkers	1.1. Struggles with organization, memory and planning
1.2. Good verbal skills	1.2. Struggles with literacy and numeracy skills
1.3. Often good at artistic subjects	1.3. Poor concentration
1.4. Often good using technology	1.4. Poor stamina
1.5. Often good at sport	1.5. Struggles with day-to-day things (telling time, etc)
1.6. Often good working with 3D	1.6. Problems with co-ordination
1.7. More able than written ability suggests	1.7. Low self-esteem

AREA 2: ACCOMMODATIONS INVOLVING "SEN-FRIENDLY" CLASSROOM

Schools can implement academic accommodations and modifications to help students with **dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and dysorthographia** succeed. For example, a student with reading/ writing/ calculation disorder can be given extra time to complete tasks, help with taking notes, and work assignments that are modified appropriately. Teachers can give taped tests or allow students with dyslexia to use alternative means of assessment. Students can benefit from listening to books on tape and using text reading and word processing computer programs.

Teaching students with dyslexia across settings is challenging. General education teachers seek accommodations that foster the learning and management of a class of heterogeneous learners. It is important to identify accommodations that are reasonable to ask of teachers in all classroom settings. According to **International Dyslexia Association (IDA) – Dyslexia in the Classroom** (www.dyslexiaIDA.org), the following accommodations provide a framework for helping students with learning problems achieve in primary and secondary education "SEN-friendly" classrooms.

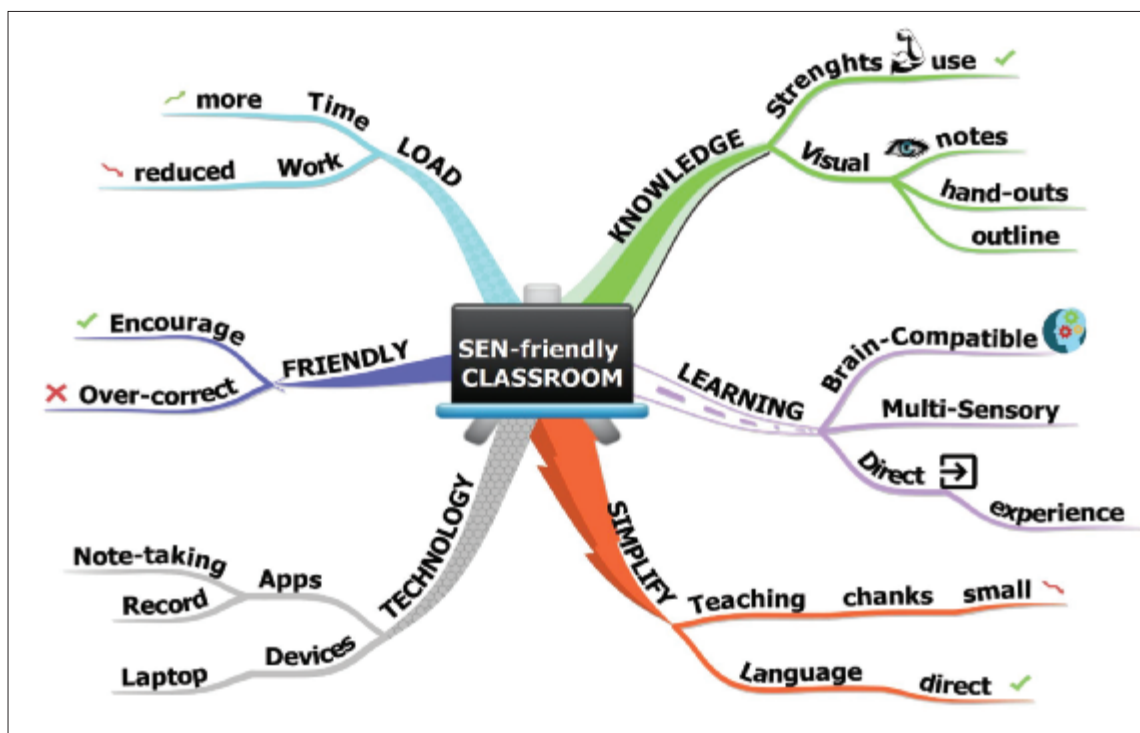


FIG.1 – „SEN-friendly” Classroom Mind Map

AREA 3: ACCOMMODATIONS INVOLVING INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTION

The task of gaining students’ attention and engaging them for a period of time requires many teachings and managing skills. Teaching and interactions should provide successful learning experiences for each student.

According to **International Dyslexia Association (IDA) – Dyslexia in the Classroom** (www.dyslexiaIDA.org), some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

- 3.1. Provide a copy of lesson notes.** The teacher can give a copy of lesson notes to students who have difficulty taking notes during presentations.
- 3.2. Provide students with a graphic organizer.** An outline, chart, or blank web can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information.
- 3.3. Use step-by-step instruction.** New or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction.
- 3.4. Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays (e.g., on an overhead or handout).
- 3.5. Write key points or words on the chalkboard/whiteboard.** Prior to a presentation, the teacher can write new vocabulary words and key points on the chalkboard/whiteboard.
- 3.6. Use balanced presentations and activities.** An effort should be made to balance oral presentations with visual information and participatory activities. Also, there should be a balance between large group, small group, and individual activities.
- 3.7. Use mnemonic instruction.** Mnemonic devices can be used to help students remember key information or steps in a learning strategy.
- 3.8. Emphasize daily review.** Daily review of previous learning or lessons can help students connect new information with prior knowledge.

AREA 4: ACCOMMODATIONS INVOLVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Students vary significantly in their ability to respond in different modes. For example, students vary in their ability to give oral presentations; participate in discussions; write letters and numbers; write paragraphs; draw objects; spell; work in noisy or cluttered settings; and read, write, or speak at a fast pace. Moreover, students vary in their ability to process information presented in visual or auditory formats.

According to **International Dyslexia Association (IDA) – Dyslexia in the Classroom** (www.dyslexiaIDA.org), the following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

- 4.1. Change response mode.** For students who have difficulty with fine motor responses (such as handwriting), the response mode can be changed to underlining, selecting from multiple choices, sorting, or marking. Students with fine motor problems can be given extra space for writing answers on worksheets or can be allowed to respond on individual chalkboards/whiteboards.
- 4.2. Provide an outline of the lesson.** An outline enables some students to follow the lesson successfully and make appropriate notes. Moreover, an outline helps students to see the organization of the material and ask timely questions.
- 4.3. Encourage use of graphic organizers.** A graphic organizer involves organizing material into a visual format. To develop a graphic organizer, the student can list the topic on the first line, collect and divide information into major headings, list all information relating to major headings on index cards, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate subheadings, and place information into the organizer format.
- 4.4. Place students close to the teacher.** Students with attention problems can be seated close to the teacher, chalkboard/whiteboard, or work area and away from distracting sounds, materials, or objects.
- 4.5. Use cues to denote important items.** Asterisks or bullets can denote questions or activities that count heavily in evaluation. This helps students spend time appropriately during tests or assignments.
- 4.6. Design hierarchical worksheets.** The teacher can design worksheets with problems arranged from easiest to hardest. Early success helps students begin to work.
- 4.7. Allow use of instructional aids.** Students can be provided with letter and number strips to help them write correctly. Number lines, counters, calculators, and other assistive technology can help students compute once they understand the mathematical operations.
- 4.8. Display work samples.** Samples of completed assignments can be displayed to help students realize expectations and plan accordingly.
- 4.9. Use peer-mediated learning.** The teacher can pair peers of different ability levels to review their notes, study for a test, read aloud to each other, write stories, or conduct laboratory experiments. Also, a partner can read math problems for students with reading problems to solve.
- 4.10. Use flexible work times.** Students who work slowly can be given additional time to complete written assignments.
- 4.11. Provide additional practice.** Students require different amounts of practice to master skills or content. Many students with learning problems need additional practice to learn at a fluency level.
- 4.12. Use assignment substitutions or adjustments.** Students can be allowed to complete projects instead of oral reports or vice versa. Also, tests can be given in oral or written format.

WHAT ARE MIND MAPS?

Mind Maps are visual maps of connecting thoughts, which span out in a radial way from one central idea. A Mind Map uses only keywords to prompt memory and association, and encourages the use of colour and imagery. They can provide dyslexic people with a better way to organise and assimilate information.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MIND MAPS FOR DYSLLEXIC LEARNING?

Mind Mapping appeals to MANY SENSES

- Mind Mapping helps with dyslexia as it makes use of images, colour, shape, size and symbols to map out information in a way that is easier to comprehend. In the image below we show a comparison between plain text and a Mind Map, and it's clear to any learner that a Mind Map is far easier to read and understand

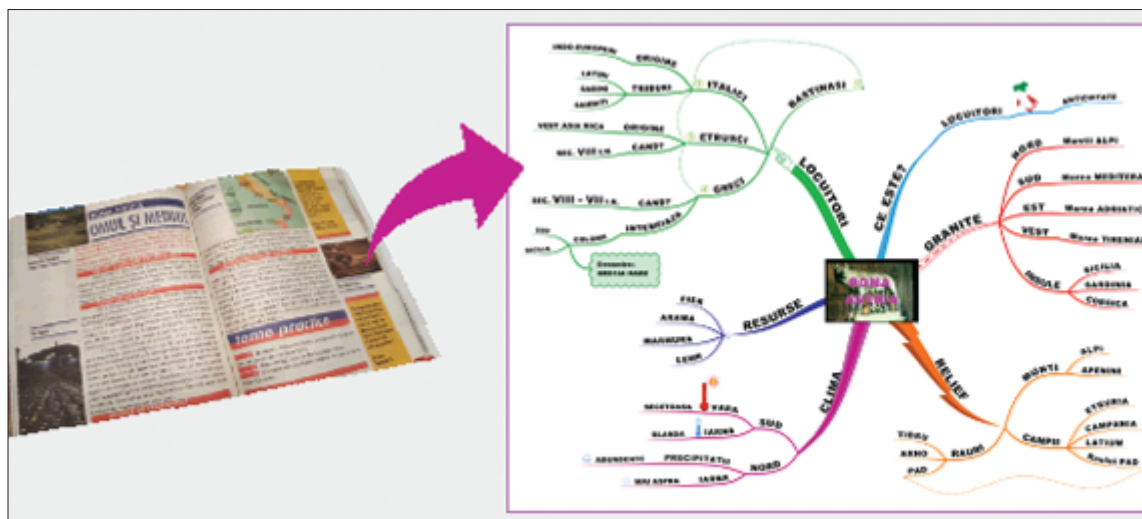


FIG.2 – Text to Mind Map

Mind Mapping improves CONCENTRATION

- Many dyslexic people can become distracted when trying to get ideas down on the page. However, when you draw a Mind Map you are constantly seeing what you have already done, whilst working on new idea. This decreases the possibility of losing your train of thought as you are automatically reviewing the rest of your Map.

Mind Mapping improves MEMORY

- Mind maps symbolize concepts with easy-to-remember visual and linguistic cues. Students remember more of what they see and draw than what they read and hear.

Mind Mapping BREAKS DOWN INFORMATION

- Using Mind Maps can also help with dyslexia by breaking down large pieces of information into easy to-read bite-sized chunks. Rather than ugly, difficult, dense text, Mind Mapping allows dyslexic learners to break down complex problems into simple, visual objects that anyone can use.

Mind Mapping gives ideas STRUCTURE

- Another huge benefit of using Mind Maps to help dyslexia is that they provide structure to your thoughts. When planning an essay, the ideas in the Mind Map can be transferred into a linear form (with the click of a button in Mind Mapping software, like iMindMap, MindMeister, Coggle, Inspiration ...) which creates the structure, paragraphs and images for your essay easily.

Mind Mapping is BRAIN-COMPATIBLE LEARNING

- Research shows the process of thinking involves a complex combination of words, colours, images, patterns, scenarios, sounds and music. Our brain also functions in many directions

simultaneously. Mind mapping closely mirrors our natural thinking process. Further, mind mapping is balanced whole-brain learning. As we create and view mind maps, we integrate the processing styles of both left and right hemispheres of our brain.

Mind Mapping improves CREATIVITY

- As students strive to capture the essence of a topic with their own mind maps, they must use imagination and inventiveness.

Mind Mapping improves COMPREHENSION

- Mind Maps provide a global perspective on the central topic. Students “get the big picture” by viewing a mind map and make their own content connections as they create their own mind maps. Learning is embedded in a more complete, meaningful context.
- Information is presented visually rather than verbally, assisting limited reading proficient students grasp basic concepts.

Mind Mapping and MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Mind mapping strongly engages four intelligences simultaneously:

- **Verbal/Linguistic** – Mind maps include key words. The students learn to be concise when they realize their mind maps and to expand key words into phrases when they use their mind maps to review, study, do their homework.
- **Logical/Mathematical** – Structure, organization and relations are integral in mind mapping.
- **Visual/Spatial** – Learning material is constructed and presented visually, including images, symbols, pictures and relations.
- **Intrapersonal** – Mind maps make learning more personally relevant.

Mind Mapping TOOLKIT for “SEN-Friendly” Primary School Classroom

- TOOL 1: BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map
- TOOL 2: HUB Mind Maps
- TOOL 3: NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps
- TOOL 4: HANDOUT Mind Maps
- TOOL 5: WRITING with Mind Maps

TOOL 1: BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5

DESCRIPTION

The **BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map** is ideal as a stand-alone lesson or as the hub of an entire unit that holds together everything covered from pre-teaching to summative assessment. In a “SEN-friendly Classroom” we will look at how to use the **BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map** as a stand-alone geography lesson on the “**Climate, Hydrography, Vegetation**”. We’ll use strengths of dyslexic students (logical thinking and good verbal skills), brain-compatible learning, visual and direct experience learning, and teach in small chunks.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in primary school education.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school teachers
- Primary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In Primary school

HOW

Sample Plan for BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map:

“Climate, Hydrography, Vegetation” lesson

Set-up	Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a difference between climate and weather, or are synonymous? ■ What kind of vegetation do you know? Is the vegetation the same everywhere in the country?
	Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What do you mean by hydrography? ■ Students will be able to complete the Mind Mapping activities to respond to the essential questions.
	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Technology (if available): video projector, mind mapping/visual thinking software (XMind Free Download for Windows - https://www.xmind.net/download/xmind8) laptop, interactive whiteboard. ■ Whiteboard, markers, paper, pens, tape, post-it.

Learning Sequence

The Hook

Prompt students: “Today we are going to learn about Climate, Vegetation and Hydrography. We’ll explore if there is a difference between climate and weather or are synonymous. We’ll find what kind of vegetation do you know and if there is the same everywhere in our country. We’ll find the meaning of hydrography.”

Exploration

Formative Assessment
Exploring gaps
Debate
Summative Assessment

Connection

Prompt students: “To begin with, we are going to see what we already know Climate, Vegetation and Hydrography. There is a difference between climate and weather, or are synonymous? What kind of vegetation do you know? Is the vegetation the same everywhere in the country? What do you mean by hydrography?”

Practice

Formative Assessment: teachers can conduct a formative assessment by completing a Brainstorm activity using Mind Mapping process. In the sample that follows, this formative assessment is treated as a whole-class activity. The teacher is the facilitator, prompting the students with questions. She/he is also the scribe, adding items to the screen/whiteboard.

1. Launch Mind Mapping software or prepare alternative materials.
2. Add a central node and name it “**Climate, Hydrography, Vegetation**”. This will be the main idea. Add branches. Display so that students can see the topic clearly.
3. Prompt students: “We are going to see what we already know about the “Climate, Hydrography, Vegetation”.
4. Follow the branches and invite students to tell you what they know, step by step, using the structure (fig. 1.1).

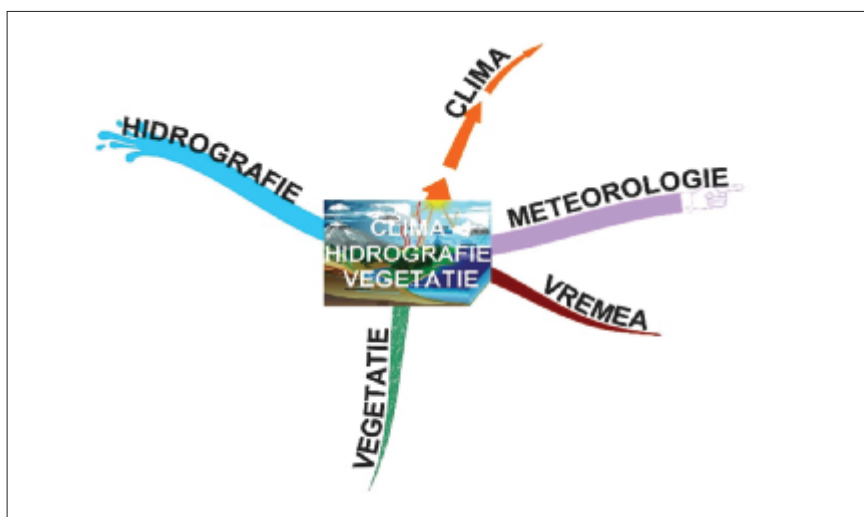


FIG. 1.1. Starting the brainstorm.

5. After brainstorming, yields a more thorough formative assessment of what students know about the subject (fig. 1.2). Any gaps in prior knowledge provide a roadmap of areas to emphasize.

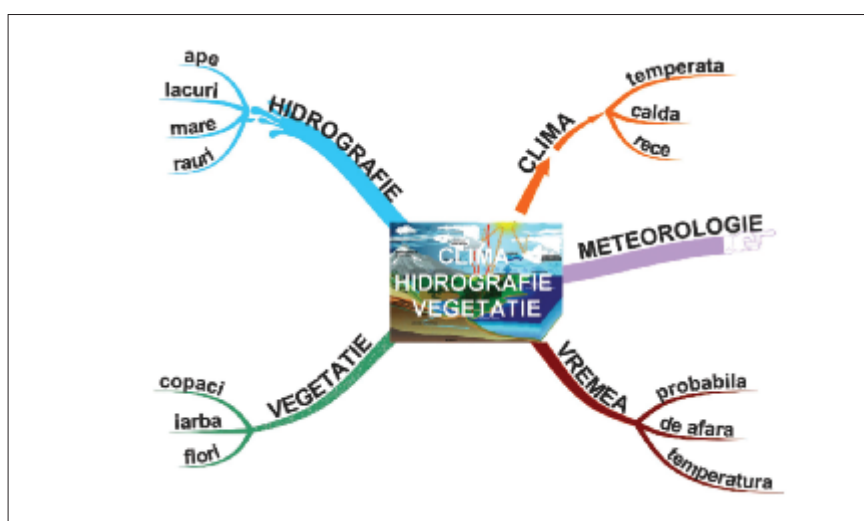


FIG. 1.2. Complete Brainstorm formative assessment

Exploring Gaps & Debate: There are countless ways to use the Brainstorm as a springboard to build on the original snapshot of student knowledge provided by the formative assessment.

In Figure 1.3, the Mind Map grew up. The importance of building on gaps in knowledge that students discover for themselves is not to be underestimated. Curious learners are infinitely more engaged when they see for themselves what they don't know.

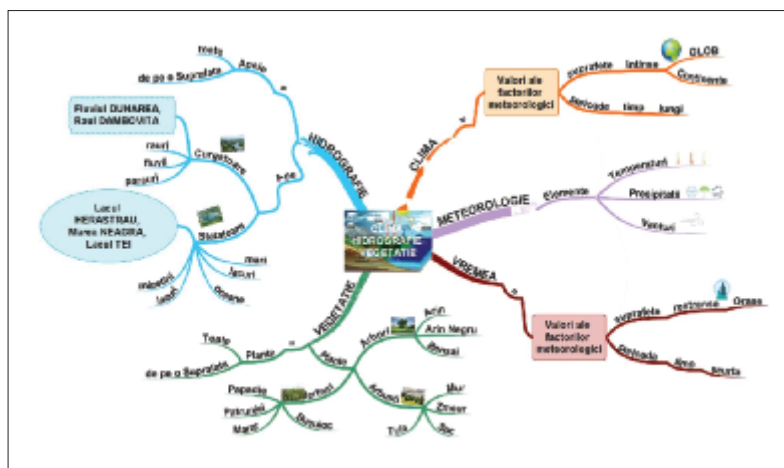


FIG. 1.3. A Mind Map can be a study guide, a visual proof of learning

Assesment

To maximize the impact of the Brainstorm with Mind Maps, this activity (which began as a pre-assessment) can naturally evolve every minute and can be used to monitor progress. Information can be added to it after each related activity, so that by the end of the study, the Mind Map provides a summary of the entire lesson. The Mind Map offers many assessment opportunities. Consistent and repeated reflection on prior and current learning will provide multiple touch points with the material to generate a level of enduring understanding that cannot occur when information is taught once or twice and is not assimilated well. Another type of formative assessment, possibly designed as a check for understanding strategy, is to ask students to respond individually to a topical question in the form of a mind map. This assessment places an emphasis on conveying detailed content understanding. Because mind maps are quick to create and show a lot of information in a distilled format, they provide teachers with a more thorough window into student understanding. As a summative assessment, teachers could ask students to create their own representation of the topics, speak to a particular area of the mind map, or write a written response to some aspect of the mind map.

Summary

By the end of the lesson, a Mind Map will have evolved to reflect new learning and a deeper understanding of the topic. It can serve as a summary, a study guide and as documentation for the journey of learning that students took to arrive at its completion.

In Figure 1.4, the Mind Map is hand drawn. Students draw their maps. Students are clear about what they have learned because they see for themselves exactly what they have accomplished that day.



FIG. 1.4. A Mind Map is a personal summary

Preview

Any topic that warrants a classroom discussion warrants a Mind Map, because it provides a

meaningful and lasting representation of a class dialogue that engages students and allows them to see how an idea fits together. It facilitates new learning and connections with other topics.

There is no limit to the versatility of the Brainstorming with Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include:

- *Historical events*
- *Scientific processes and cycles*
- *Test preparation*
- *Compare and contrast exercises*
- *Characterization*
- *Summarization*
- *Vocabulary acquisition*
- *Classification*

LINK

<https://www.monash.edu/rlo/quick-study-guides/brainstorming-and-mind-mapping>

TOOL 2: HUB Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.2
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.3

DESCRIPTION

HUB Mind Maps are extremely useful for “SEN-friendly” classroom. **HUB Mind Maps** are ideal as Hubs’ of an entire unit or a key subject treated during one year of study. Teachers can give a copy of a **HUB Mind Map**. The HUB will help students visualize, listen, find key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information. **HUB Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** A HUB Mind Map involves organizing material into a visual format.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in primary schooleducation.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school teachers
- Primary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In Primary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Provide students with a graphic organizer.

- A HUB will help students visualize, listen, find key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information.

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Vocabulary Journal Graphic Organizer:

These HUB holds all the Visual Vocabulary Cards that supports learning new words in a week.

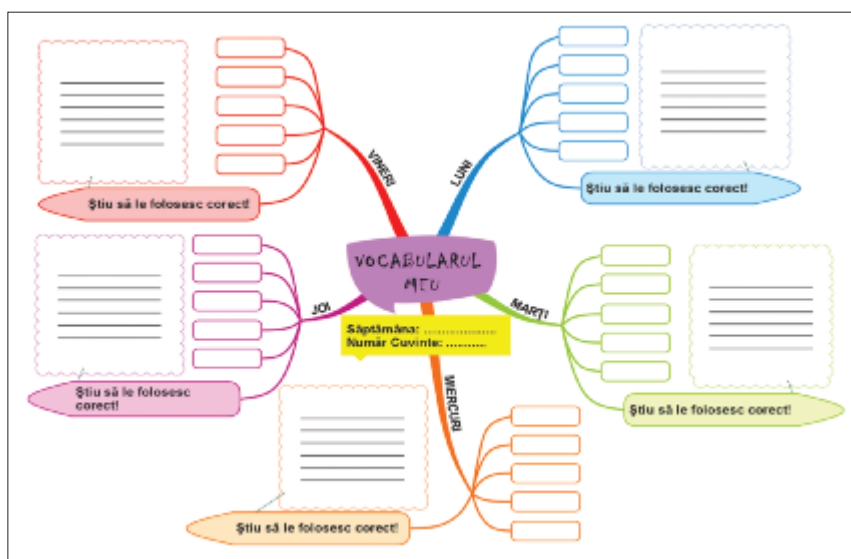


FIG. 2.1. HUB Mind Map – “My weekly vocabulary”

Visual Vocabulary Card looks like this:

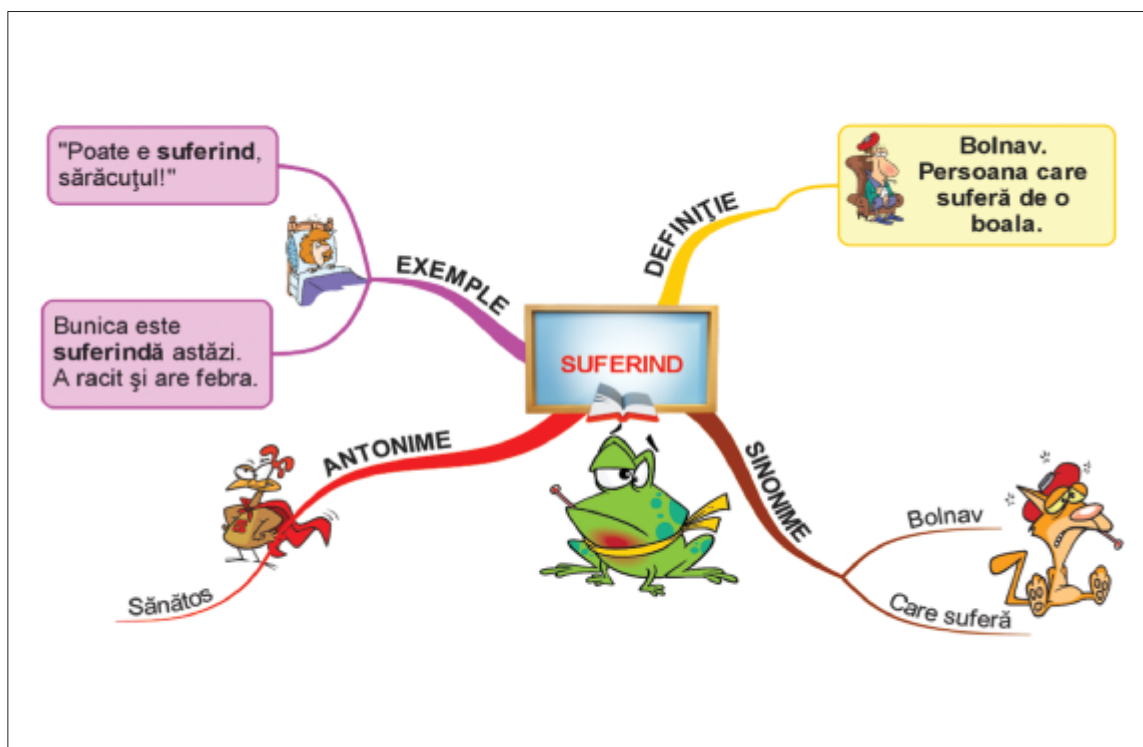


FIG. 2.2. Mind Map – “Vocabularul Vizual – Cuvântul SUFERIND”

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Key Subject Graphic Organizer:

These HUB holds all the Graphic Organizers that supports strategies and skills for reading comprehension success. Adapted from ideas in *Disrupting Think: Why How We Read Matters* by: Kylen Beers and Robert Probst

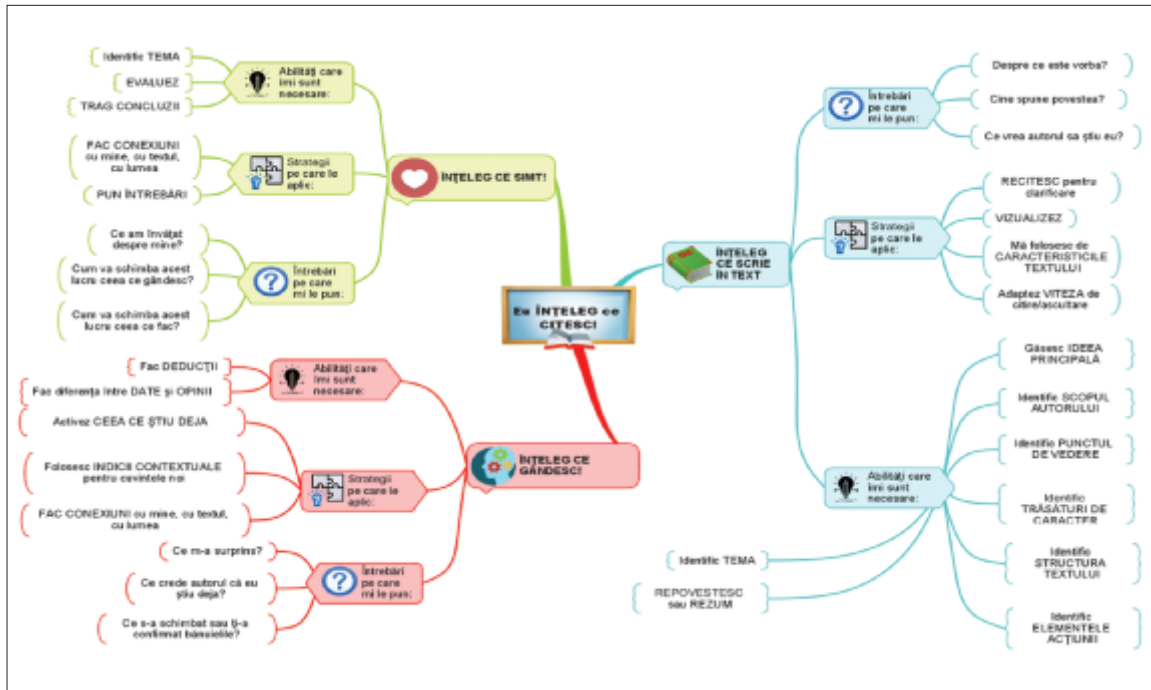


FIG. 2.3. HUB Mind Map - Reading Comprehension: Strategies and Skills

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Encourage use of graphic organizers.

- A HUB Mind Map involves organizing material into a visual format. The HUB will list all information relating to major concepts, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate categories, and place information into one page.

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Vocabulary Journal Graphic Organizer:

These HUB holds all the Visual Vocabulary Cards that supports learning new words in a week.

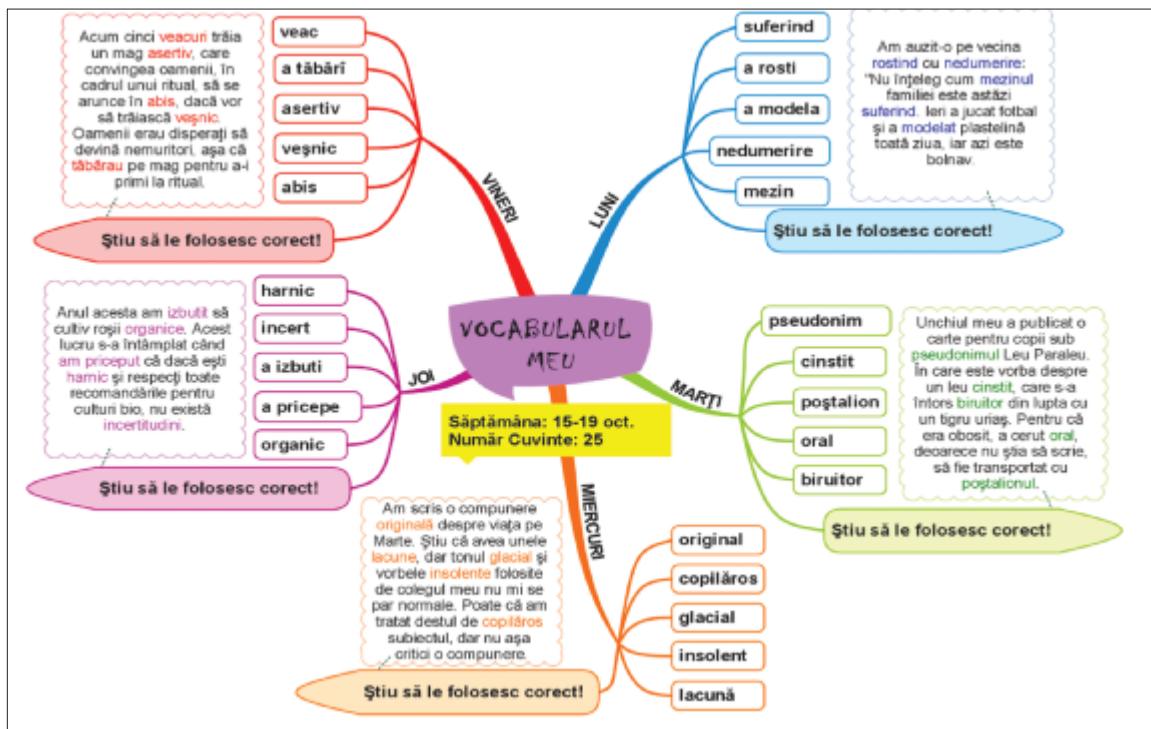


FIG. 2.4. HUB Mind Map – "Vocabularul meu saptamanal – Exemplu completare Clasa a 4-a"

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

There is no limit to the versatility of the HUB Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include:

- Study units
- Books
- Projects
- Research
- Tests

LINK

<https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/mind-map-examples/>

TOOL 3: NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.3
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.1, 3.2
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.1, 4.2

DESCRIPTION

NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps is perfect for “SEN-friendly” classroom. Teachers can give a copy of lesson notes to students who have difficulty taking notes during presentations. A note-taking organizer can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information. **Note-taking with Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in primary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school teachers
- Primary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In Primary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Provide a copy of lesson notes:

- The teacher can give a copy of lesson notes to students who have difficulty taking notes during presentations.

Here is an example for **NOTE-TAKING Mind Map as Lesson Notes:**



FIG. 3.1. Lesson Notes “Life environment” – Overview

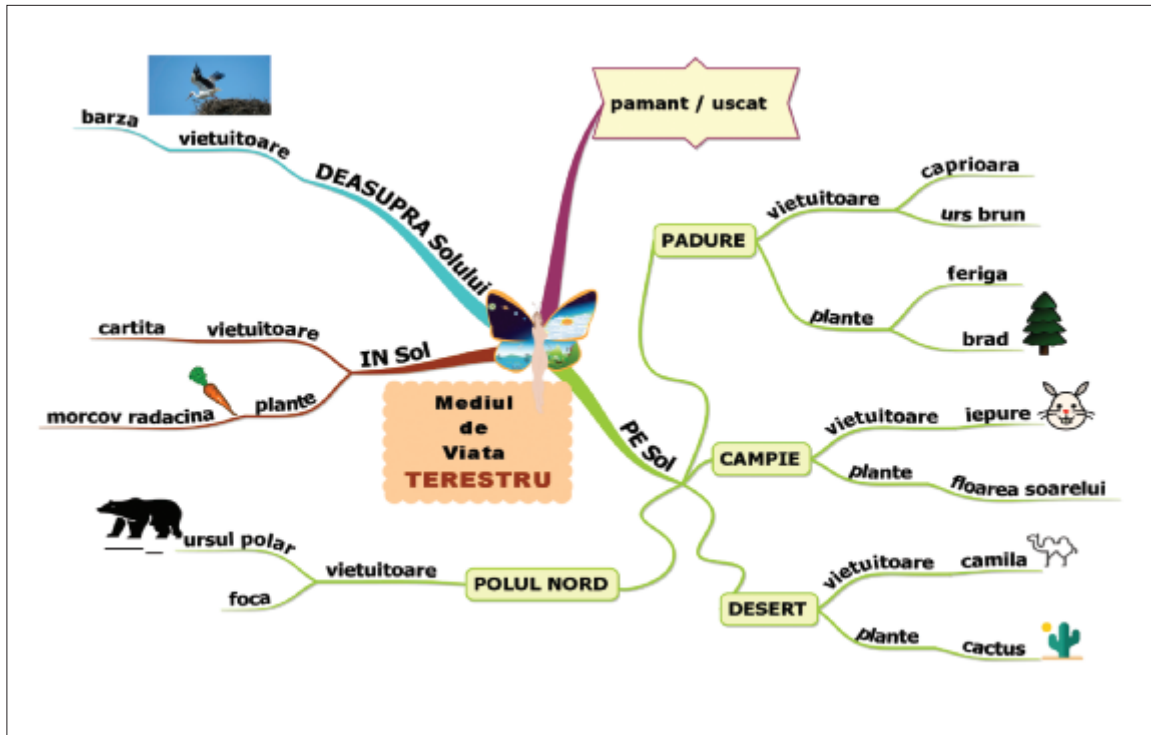


FIG. 3.2. Lesson Notes "Life environment on EARTH"

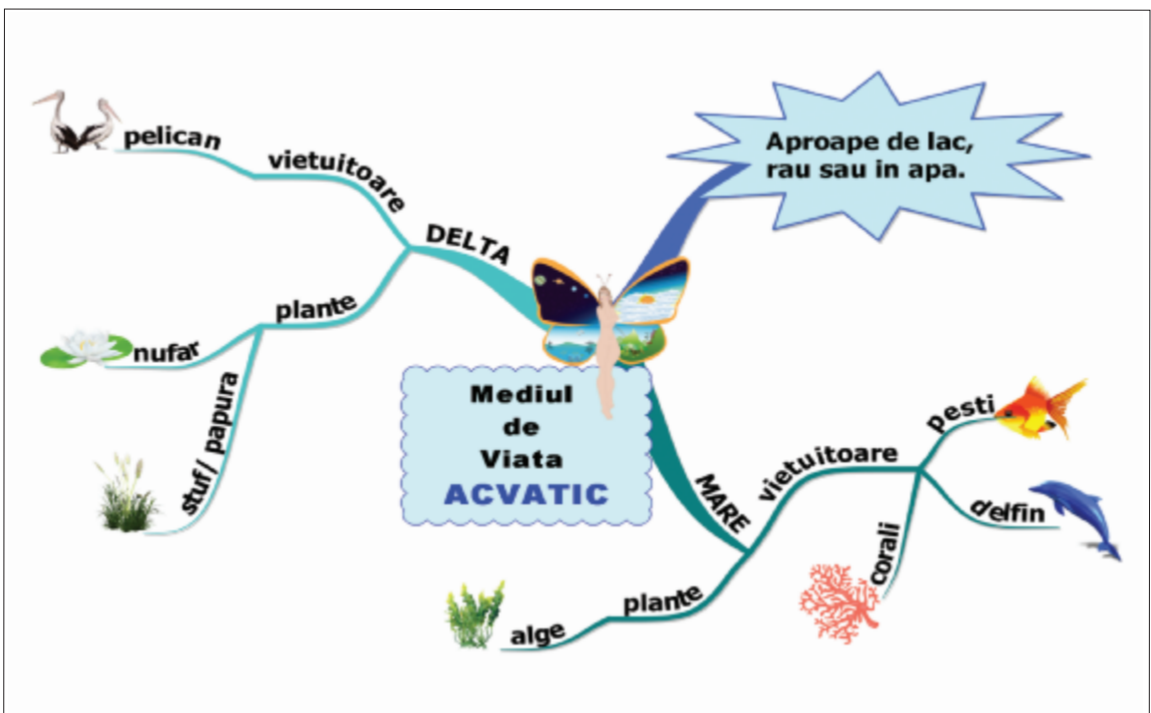


FIG. 3.3. Lesson Notes "Life environment on EARTH"

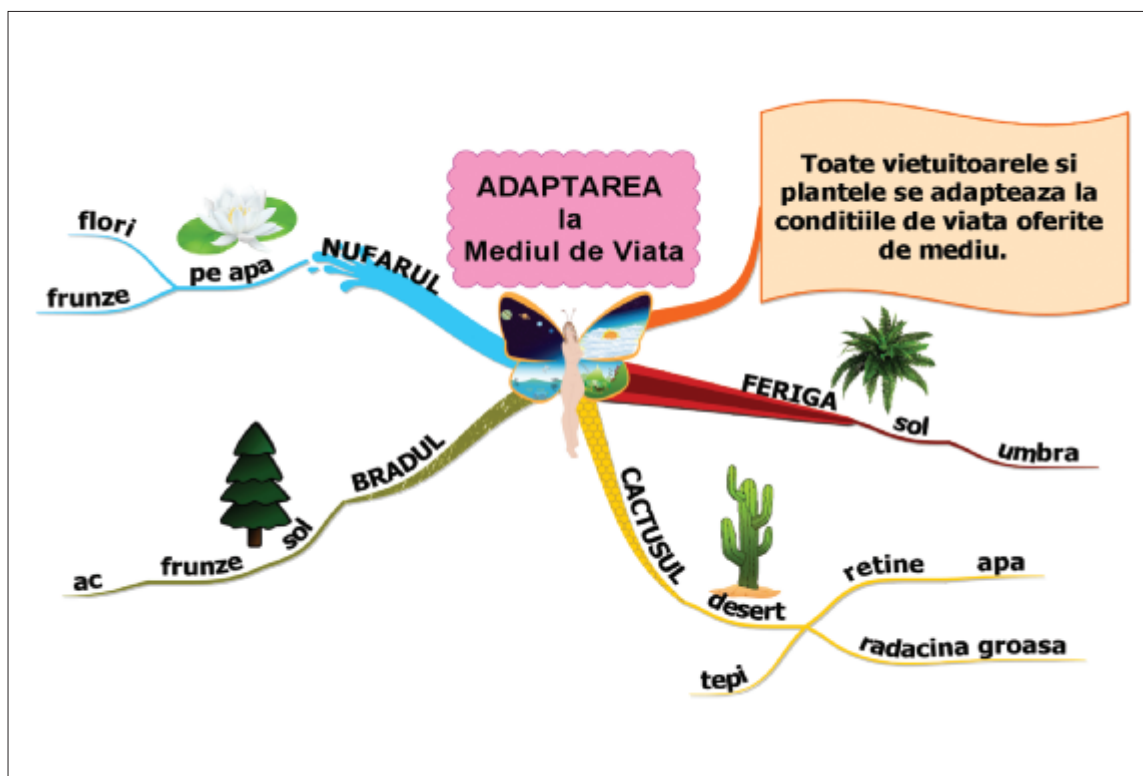


FIG. 3.4. Lesson Notes "Life environment – ADAPTATION"

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Provide students with a graphic organizer.

- An outline, chart, or blank web can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information.

Here is an example for NOTE-TAKING Mind Map as Graphic Organizer:

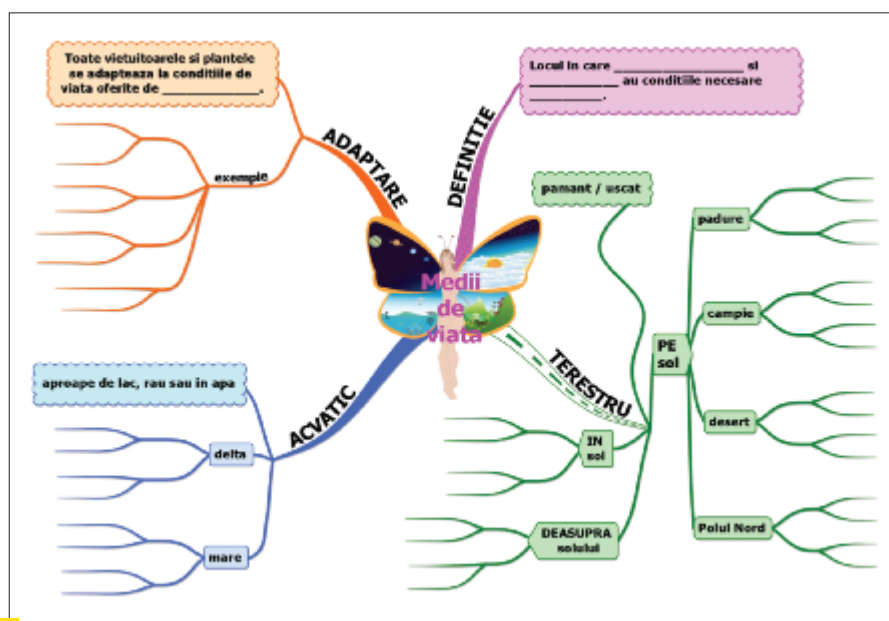


FIG. 3.4. Lesson Notes "Life environment – ADAPTATION"

There is no limit to the versatility of the NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include: Reading / listening books; Watching videos; Researching; Study notes

LINK

<https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/effective-note-taking/>

TOOL 4: HANDOUT Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.3, 3.4, 3.7
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.2, 4.3

DESCRIPTION

HANDOUT Mind Maps are especially helpful for “SEN-friendly” classroom. Teachers can use step-by-step instruction, so new or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction. **HANDOUT Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in primary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school teachers
- Primary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In Primary school

HOW

To create a handout, Teachers can use a template like these:

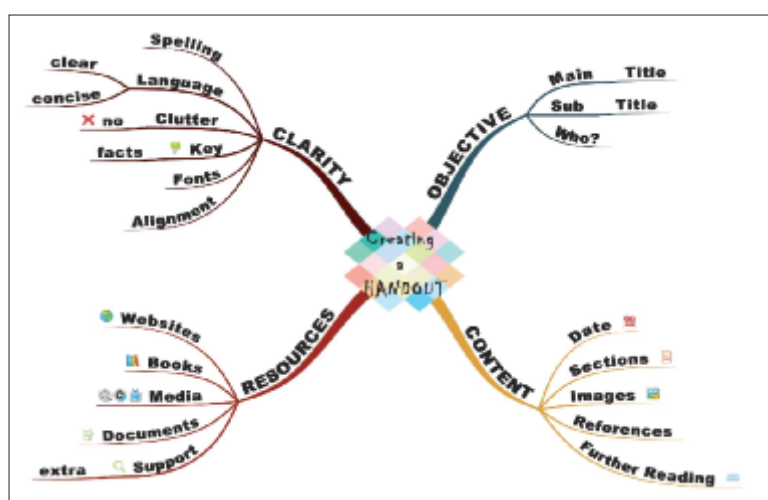


FIG. 4.1 Creating a HANDOUT Mind Map Template

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Use step-by-step instruction.

- New or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Step-by-Step instruction:



FIG. 4.2 A HANDOUT Mind Map with step-by-step instruction for Summarizing.

Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.

- Verbal information can be provided with visual displays (e.g., on an overhead or handout).

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Verbal to Visual Information:

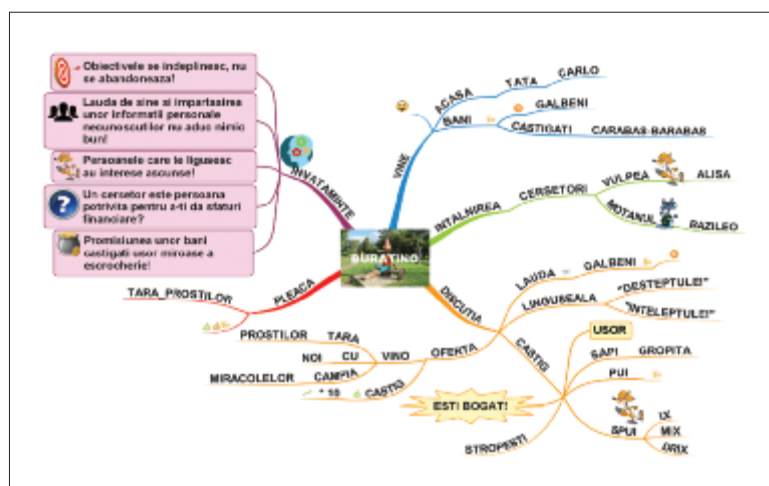


FIG. 4.3 A HANDOUT Mind Map for Summarizing a piece of text from Buratino, by Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy

Use mnemonic instruction

- Mnemonic devices can be used to help students remember key information or steps in a learning strategy

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Mnemonic instruction:

O.R.E.O. is a mnemonic device that helps students write persuasive texts.

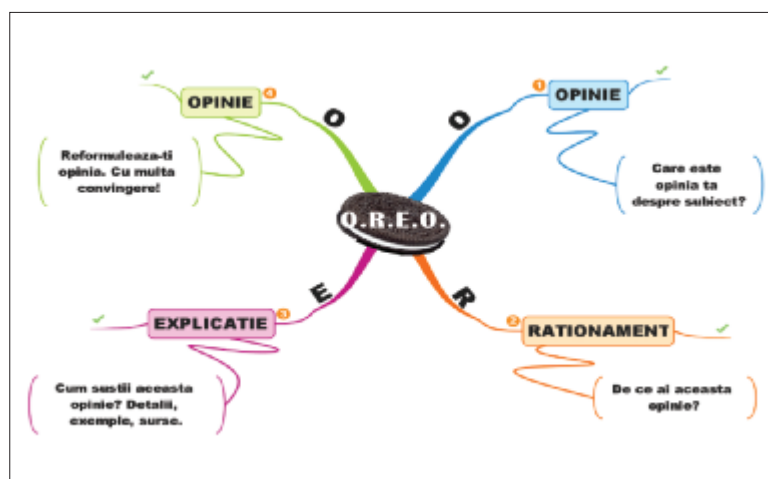


FIG. 4.4 A HANDOUT Mind Map for R.A.C.E. mnemonic device

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Provide an outline of the lesson.

- An outline enables some students to follow the lesson successfully and make appropriate notes. Moreover, an outline helps students to see the organization of the material and ask timely questions.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Outline of the lesson:

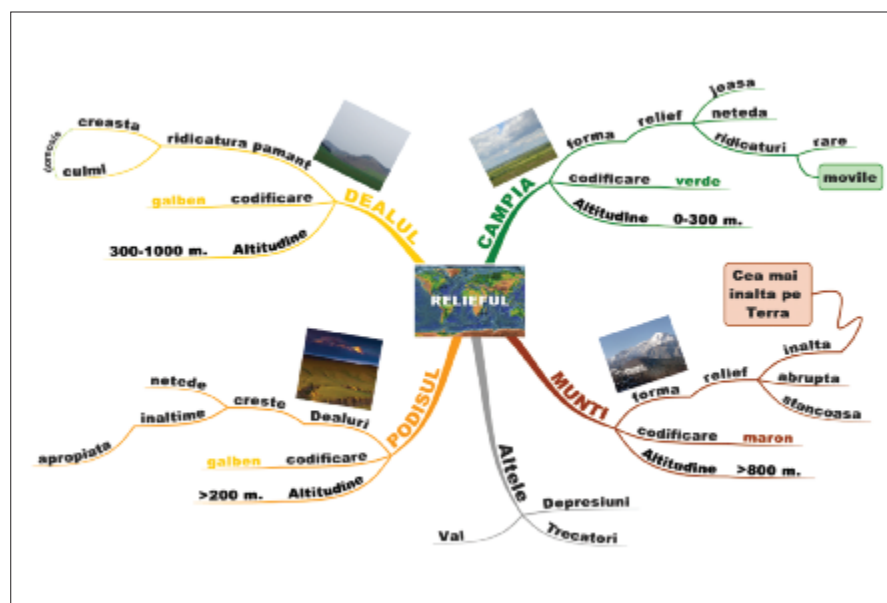


FIG. 4.5 A HANDOUT Mind Map as Outline of the geography lesson "Relieful"

Encourage use of graphic organizers

- A graphic organizer involves organizing material into a visual format. To develop a graphic organizer, the student can list the topic on the first line, collect and divide information into major headings, list all information relating to major headings on index cards, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate subheadings, and place information into the organizer format.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Graphic organizer:

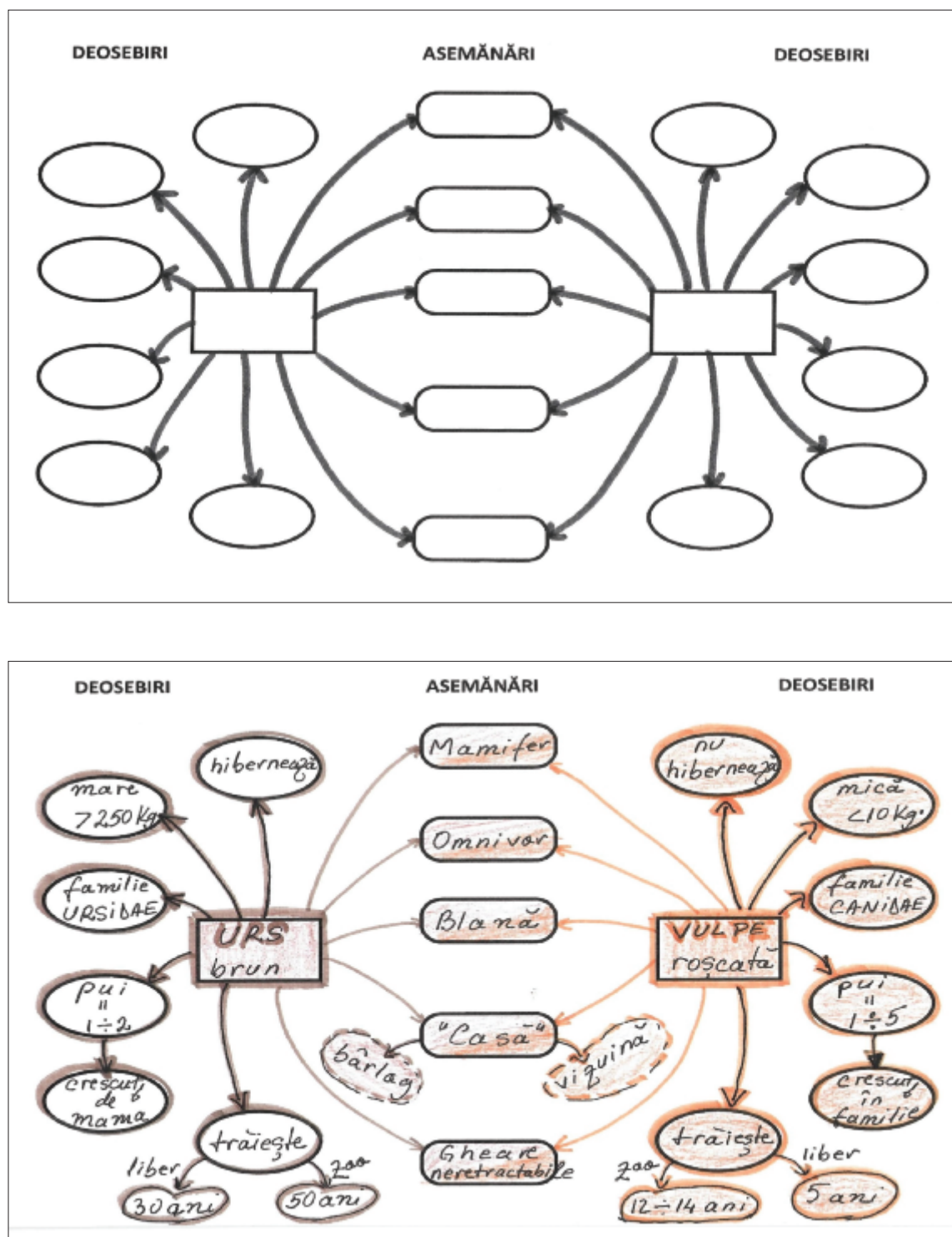


FIG. 4.6 A HANDOUT Mind Map as Graphic organizer for Reading Comprehension: Compare and Contrast"

There is no limit to the versatility of the **HANDOUT Mind Maps**, and a few areas to explore include: Note-taking; Templates; Strategies; Tips & Tricks; Graphic Organizers

LINK

<https://www.ayoa.com/ourblog/using-mind-mapping-for-curriculum-planning/>

TOOL 5: WRITING WITH MIND MAPS

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.3, 3.4, 3.5
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.3, 4.7

DESCRIPTION

WRITING with Mind Maps are especially helpful for “SEN-friendly” classroom. Teachers can use instructional aids, templates, step-by-step instruction, key points to help students write an essay, so new or difficult information can be presented visual, in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction. **WRITING with Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in primary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Primary school teachers
- Primary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In Primary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Use step-by-step instruction.

- New or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction.

Here is an example for **WRITING with Mind Maps as step-by-step instruction**:

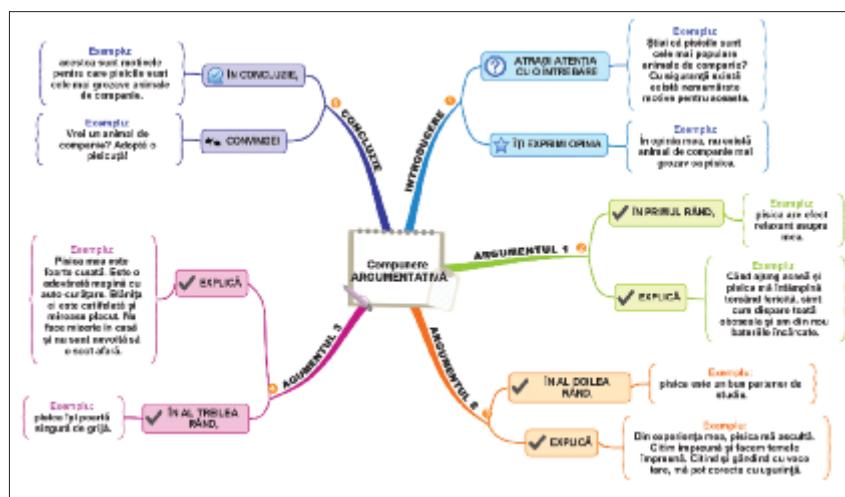


FIG. 5.1 WRITING with Mind Maps as step-by-step instruction for “Writing an argumentative composition”

Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.

- Verbal information can be provided with visual displays (e.g., on an overhead or handout).

Here is an example for **WRITING** with Mind Maps as a Visual Display Handout:

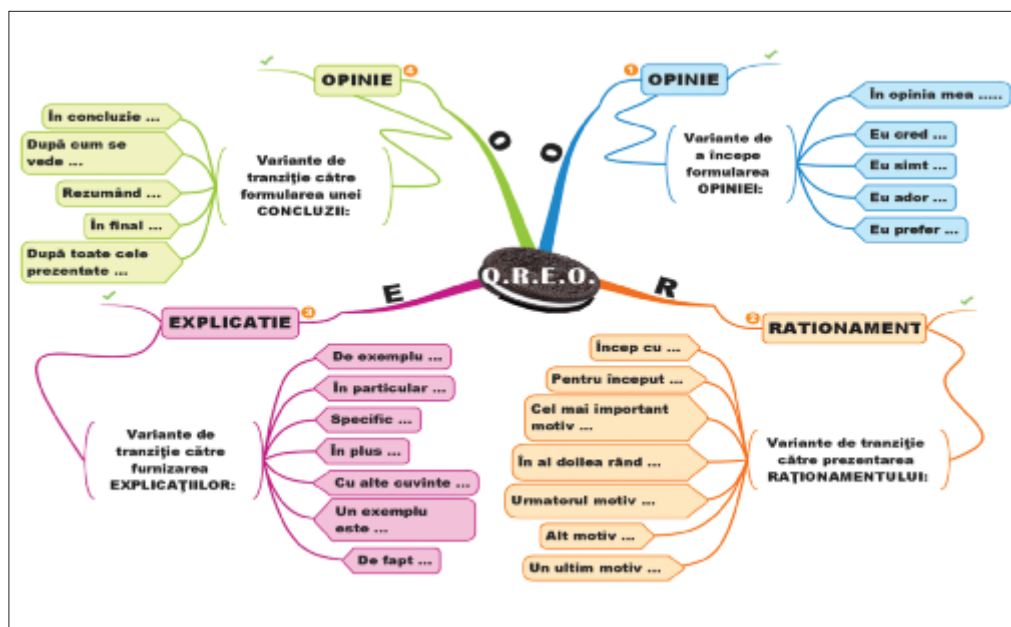


FIG. 5.2 WRITING with Mind Maps as visual display for "Transition Words"

Write key points or words on a handout.

- The teacher will write key points and words on a handout and will provide it to students, prior to writing a non-literary paragraph text.

Here is an example for **WRITING** with Mind Maps as a Key Point Material:



FIG. 5.3 WRITING with Mind Maps as a key point material for "Writing a non-literary paragraph text"

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Encourage use of graphic organizers.

- A graphic organizer involves organizing material into a visual format. To develop a graphic organizer, the student can list the topic on the first line, collect and divide information into major headings, list all information relating to major headings on index cards, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate subheadings, and place information into the organizer format.

Here is an example for WRITING with Mind Maps as a Graphic Organizer:

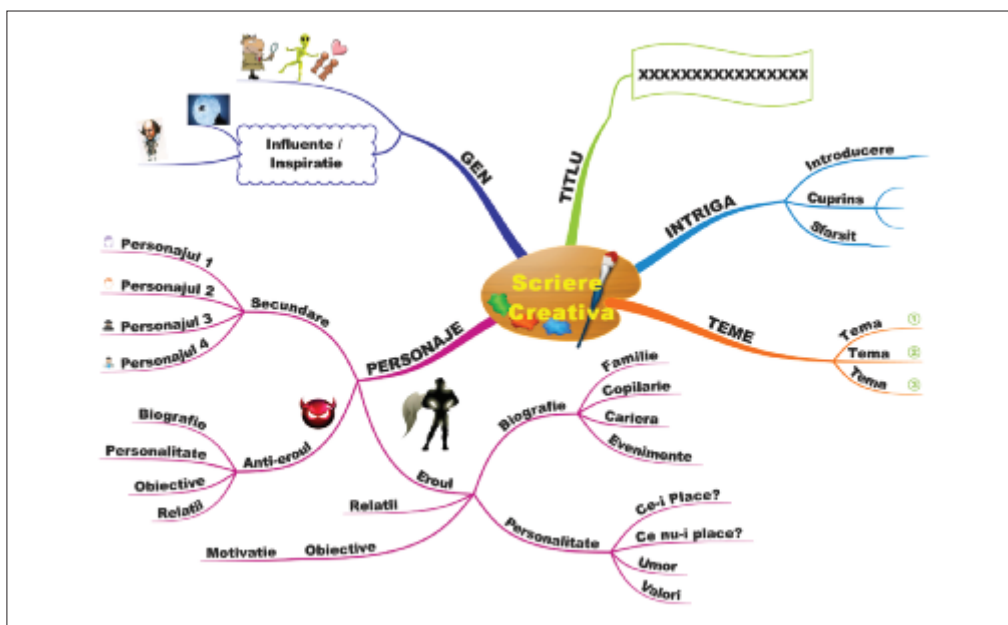


FIG. 5.4 WRITING with Mind Maps as a Graphic Organizer for planning to write an imaginative story

Allow use of instructional aids.

- Students can be provided with handouts, visual maps, graphic organizers, so that can concentrate on writing, not on structure, sequences, key words.

Here is an example for WRITING with Mind Maps as an Instructional Aid:

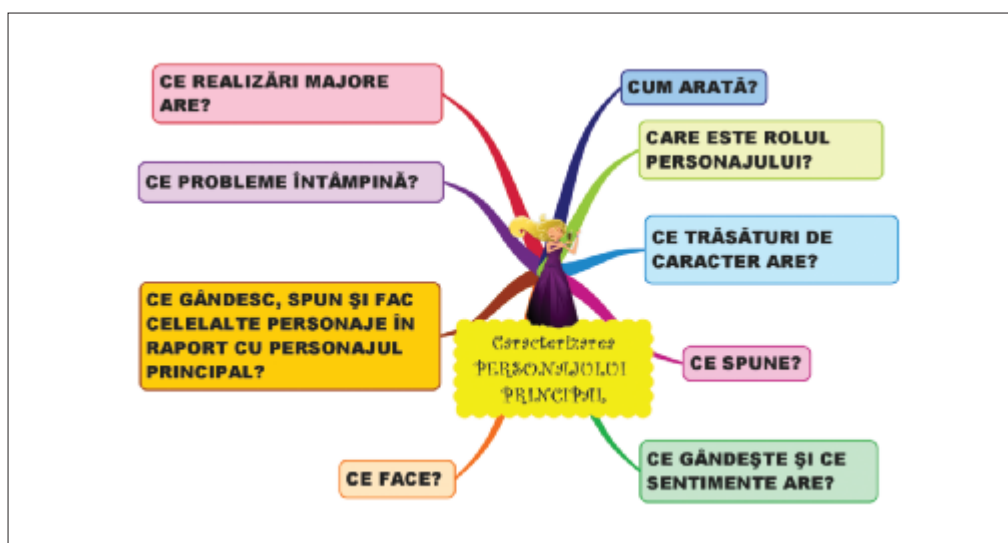


FIG. 5.5 WRITING with Mind Maps as an instructional aid material for "Characterization of the main character"

Mind Mapping TOOLKIT for “SEN-Friendly” Secondary School Classroom

- TOOL 1: BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map
- TOOL 2: HUB Mind Maps
- TOOL 3: NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps
- TOOL 4: HANDOUT Mind Maps
- TOOL 5: WRITING with Mind Maps

TOOL 1: BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5

DESCRIPTION

The **BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map** is ideal as a stand-alone lesson or as the hub of an entire unit that holds together everything covered from pre-teaching to summative assessment. In a “SEN-friendly Classroom” we will look at how to use the **BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map** as a stand-alone history lesson on the “**Ancient Rome – People&Environment**”. We’ll use strengths of dyslexic students (logical thinking and good verbal skills), brain-compatible learning, visual and direct experience learning, and teach in small chunks.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in secondary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In secondary school

HOW

Sample Plan for **BRAINSTORMING with Mind Map**:

- **Ancient Rome – People&Environment” lesson**

Set-up

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Essential Questions</p> <p>Learning Objectives</p> <p>Materials</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Where was located Ancient Rome and how it looked like? ■ Who lived in Ancient Rome? ■ Students will be able to complete the Mind Mapping activities to respond to the essential questions. ■ Technology (if available): video projector, mind mapping/visual thinking software (XMind Free Download for Windows - https://www.xmind.net/download/xmind8), laptop, interactive whiteboard. ■ Whiteboard, markers, paper, pens, tape, post-it. |
|--|--|

Learning Sequence

The Hook

Prompt students: “Today we are going to learn about Ancient Rome. We’ll explore where it was located and how it looked like. We’ll find who lived in Ancient Rome.”

Exploration

Formative Assessment
Exploring gaps
Debate
Summative Assessment

Connection

Prompt students: “To begin with, we are going to see what we already know about the Ancient Rome. Where was located Ancient Rome and how it looked like? Who lived in Ancient Rome?”

Practice

Formative Assessment: teachers can conduct a formative assessment by completing a Brainstorm activity using Mind Mapping process. In the sample that follows, this formative assessment is treated as a whole-class activity. The teacher is the facilitator, prompting the students with questions. She/he is also the scribe, adding items to the screen/whiteboard.

1. Launch Mind Mapping software or prepare alternative materials.
2. Add a central node and name it “**Ancient Rome – People & Environment**”. This will be the main idea. Add branches. Display so that students can see the topic clearly.
3. Prompt students: “We are going to see what we already know about the “**Ancient Rome – People & Environment**” 4. Follow the branches and invite students to tell you what they know, step by step, using the structure (fig. 1.1).

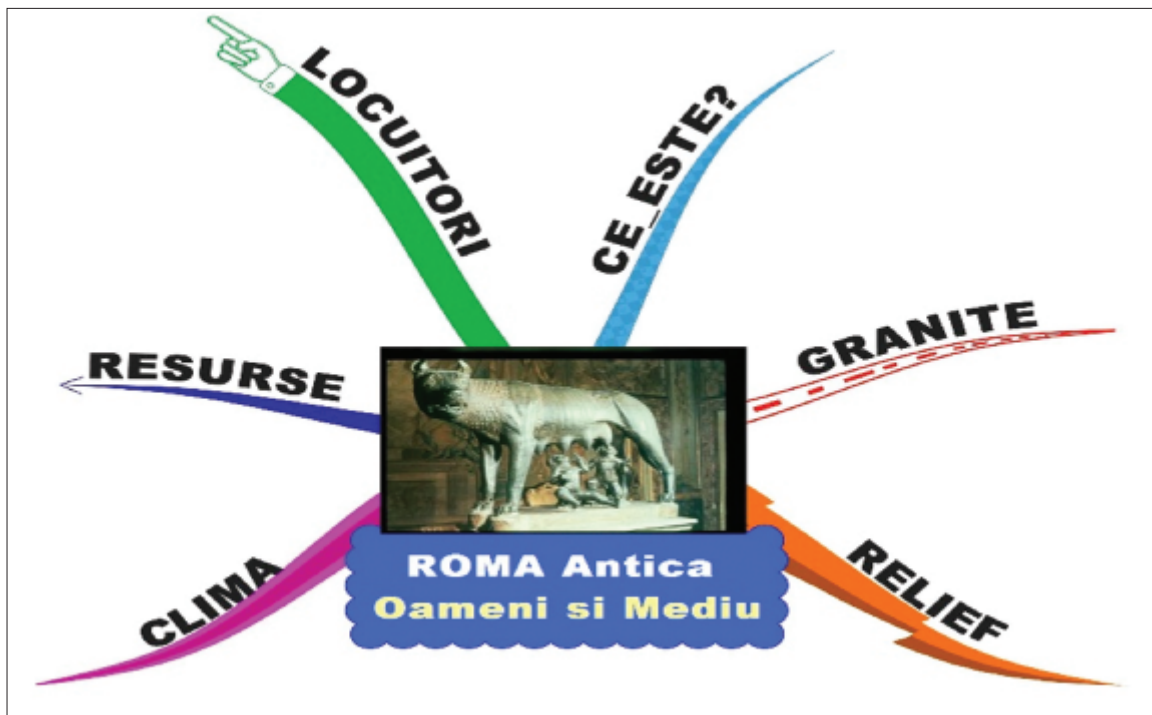


FIG. 1.1. Starting the brainstorm

5. After brainstorming, yields a more thorough formative assessment of what students know about the subject (fig. 1.2). Any gaps in prior knowledge provide a roadmap of areas to emphasize.

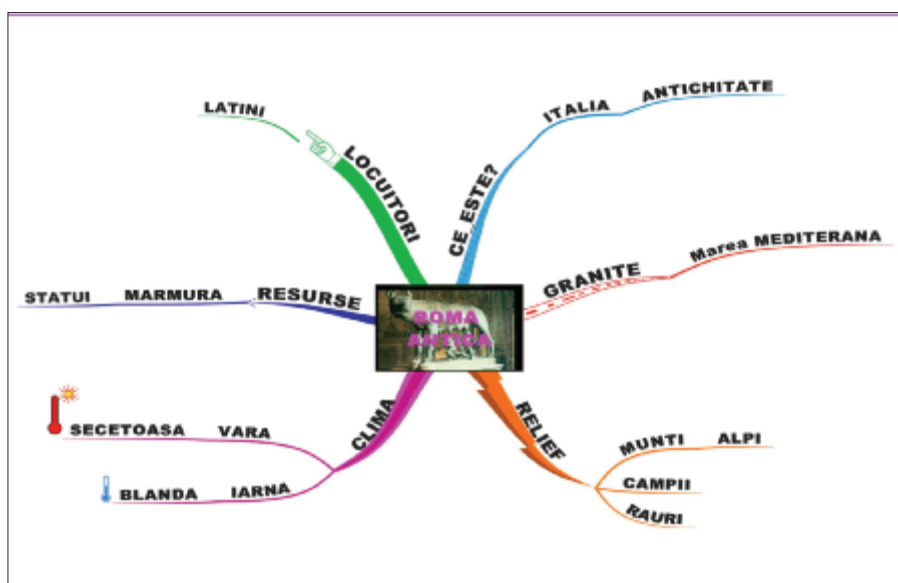


FIG. 1.2. Complete Brainstorm formative assessment

Exploring Gaps & Debate: There are countless ways to use the Brainstorm as a springboard to build on the original snapshot of student knowledge provided by the formative assessment.

In Figure 1.3, the Mind Map grew up. The importance of building on gaps in knowledge that students discover for themselves is not to be underestimated. Curious learners are infinitely more engaged when they see for themselves what they don't know.



FIG. 1.3. A Mind Map can be a study guide, a visual proof of learning.

Assessment

To maximize the impact of the Brainstorm with Mind Maps, this activity (which began as a pre-assessment) can naturally evolve every minute and can be used to monitor progress. Information can be added to it after each related activity, so that by the end of the study, the Mind Map provides a summary of the entire lesson. The Mind Map offers many assessment opportunities. Consistent and repeated reflection on prior and current learning will provide multiple touch points with the material to generate a level of enduring understanding that cannot occur when information is taught once or twice and is not assimilated well. Another type of formative assessment, possibly designed as a check for understanding strategy, is to ask students to respond individually to a topical question in the form of a mind map. This assessment places an emphasis on conveying detailed content understanding. Because mind maps are quick to

create and show a lot of information in a distilled format, they provide teachers with a more thorough window into student understanding. As a summative assessment, teachers could ask students to create their own representation of the topics, speak to a particular area of the mind map, or write a written response to some aspect of the mind map.

Summary

By the end of the lesson, a Mind Map will have evolved to reflect new learning and a deeper understanding of the topic. It can serve as a summary, a study guide and as documentation for the journey of learning that students took to arrive at its completion.

In **Figure 1.4**, the Mind Map is hand drawn. Students draw their maps. Students are clear about what they have learned because they see for themselves exactly what they have accomplished that day.



FIG. 1.4. A Mind Map is a personal summary.

Preview

Any topic that warrants a classroom discussion warrants a Mind Map, because it provides a meaningful and lasting representation of a class dialogue that engages students and allows them to see how an idea fits together. It facilitates new learning and connections with other topics.

There is no limit to the versatility of the Brainstorming with Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include:

- Historical events
- Scientific processes and cycles
- Essay planning (descriptive, persuasive, informative)
- Test preparation
- Compare and contrast exercises
- Characterization
- Summarization
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Classification

LINK

<https://www.monash.edu/rlo/quick-study-guides/brainstorming-and-mind-mapping>

TOOL 2: HUB Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.2
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.3

DESCRIPTION

HUB Mind Maps are extremely useful for “SEN-friendly” classroom. **HUB Mind Maps** are ideal as Hubs’ of an entire unit or a key subject treated during one year of study. Teachers can give a copy of a HUB Mind Map. The HUB will help students visualize, listen, find key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information. **HUB Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** A HUB Mind Map involves organizing material into a visual format.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in secondary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In secondary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Provide students with a graphic organizer.

- A HUB will help students visualize, listen, find key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information.

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Unit Graphic Organizer:

Student will find key information from eBook “Dyslexic's friend in the Romanian language”. They have a helicopter view about a concept, they see the pages, the concept, the relationship among concepts and related information.



FIG. 2.1. HUB Mind Map – “Romanian Language: Morphology”

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Key Subject Graphic Organizer:

Student will find key information from eBook “Prietenul dislexicului la Literatura Romana”. They have a helicopter view about a concept, they see the pages, the concept, the relationship among concepts and related information.

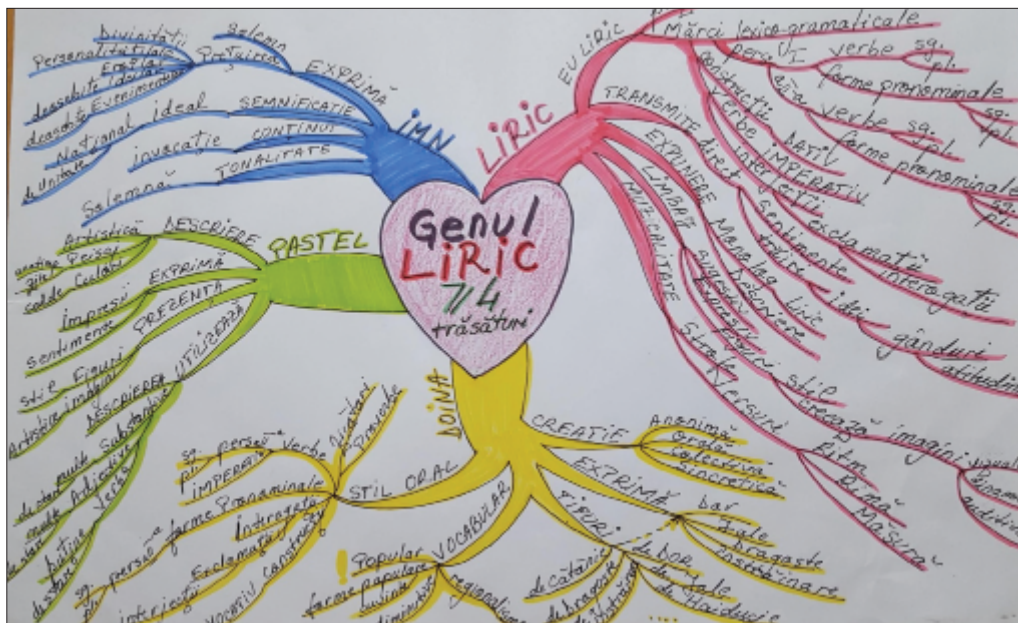


FIG. 2.2. HUB Mind Map – “Romanian Language: Characteristics of Lyrical Type”

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students’ performance:

Encourage use of graphic organizers.

- A HUB Mind Map involves organizing material into a visual format. The HUB will list all information relating to major concepts, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate categories, and place information into one page.

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Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Unit Study Graphic Organizer:

Student will find key information from eBook "Prietenul dislexicului la Limba Romana". They have a helicopter view about a concept, they see the pages, the concept, the relationship among concepts and related information.

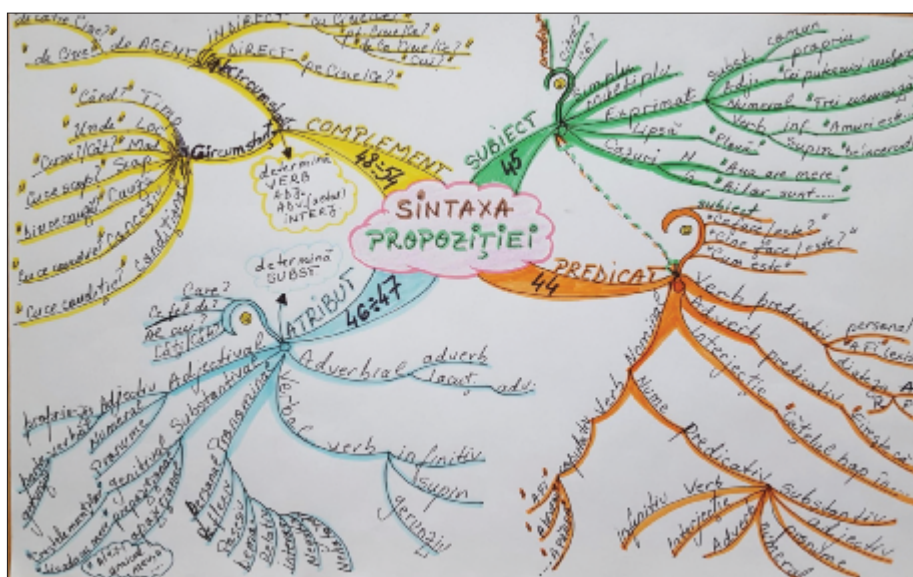


FIG. 2.3. HUB Mind Map – "Romanian Language: Sentence Syntax"

Here is an example for HUB Mind Map as a Key Subject Graphic Organizer:

Student will find key information from eBook "Prietenul dislexicului la Literatura Romana". They have a helicopter view about a concept, they see the pages, the concept, the relationship among concepts and related information.

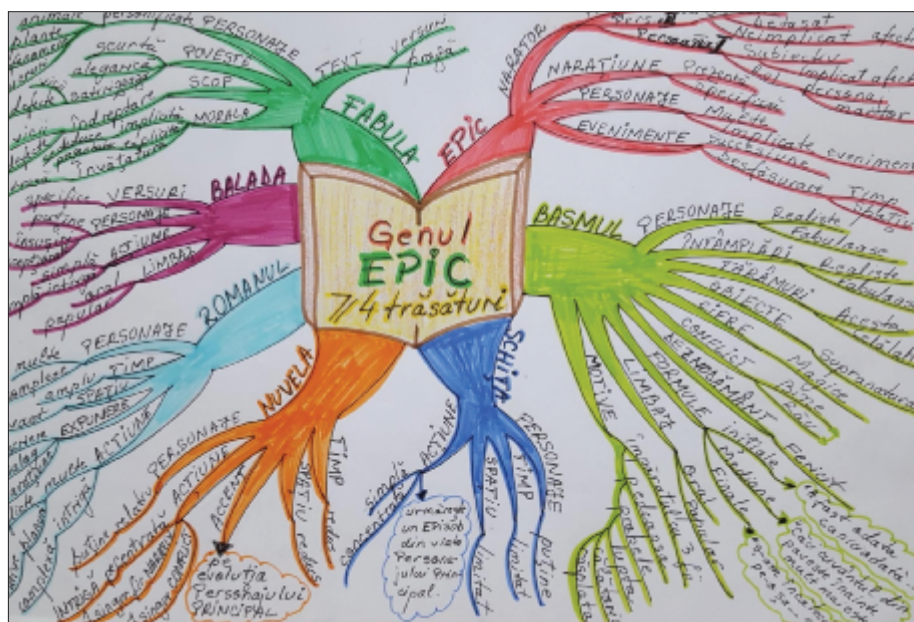


FIG. 2.4. HUB Mind Map – "Romanian Language"

There is no limit to the versatility of the HUB Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include: Study units; Books; Projects; Research; Exams.

TOOL 3: NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.3
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.1, 3.2
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.1, 4.2

DESCRIPTION

NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps is perfect for “SEN-friendly” classroom. Teachers can give a copy of lesson notes to students who have difficulty taking notes during presentations. A note-taking organizer can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information. **Note-taking with Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in secondary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In secondary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Provide a copy of lesson notes:

- The teacher can give a copy of lesson notes to students who have difficulty taking notes during presentations.

Here is an example for **NOTE-TAKING Mind Map as Lesson Notes**:



FIG. 3.1. Lesson Notes “Greece” – Overview

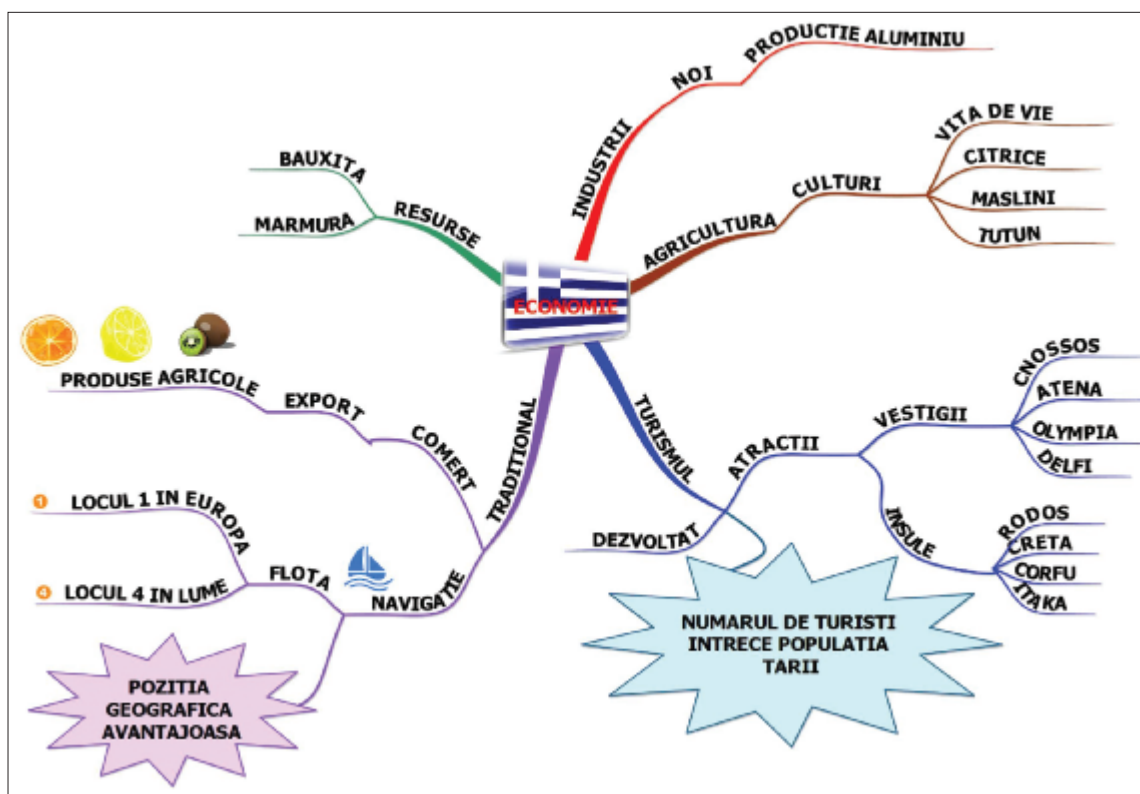


FIG. 3.2. Lesson Notes "Greece: Economy"

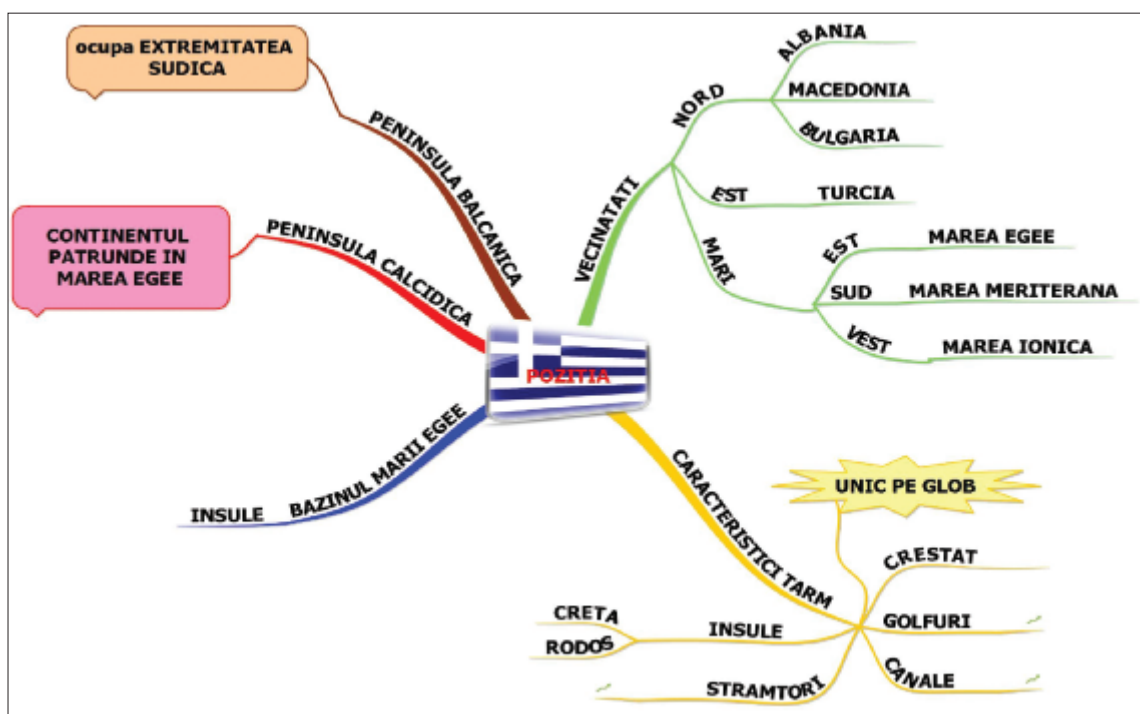


FIG. 3.3. Lesson Notes "Greece: Geographical Position"

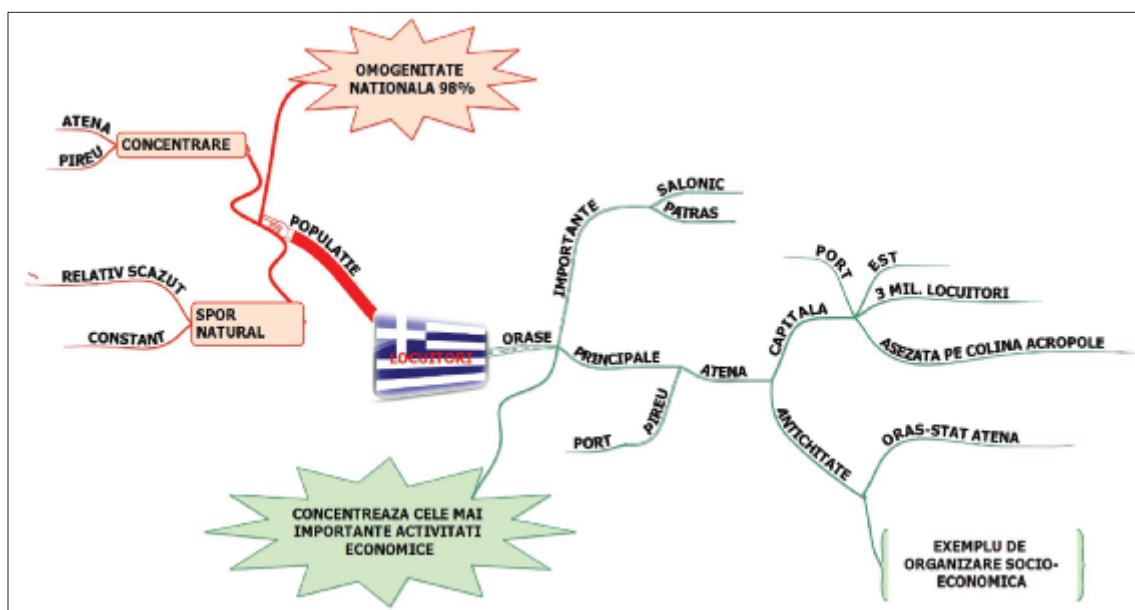


FIG. 3.4. Lesson Notes "Greece: Citizens"

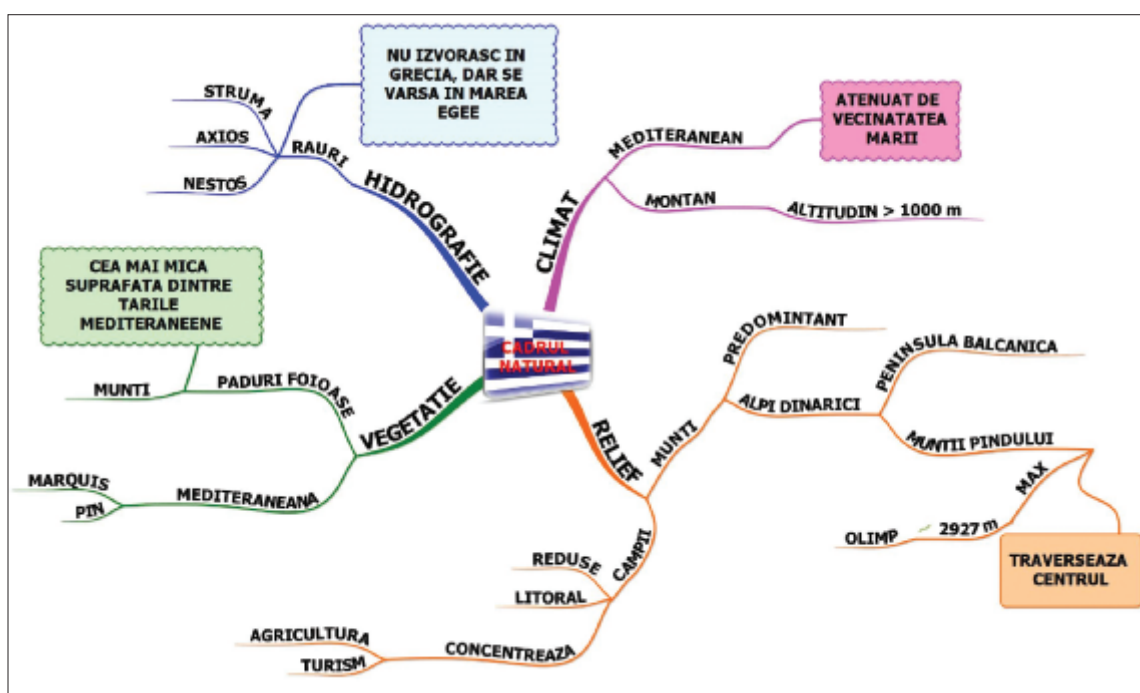


FIG. 3.5. Lesson Notes "Greece: Natural Environment"

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Provide students with a graphic organizer.

- An outline, chart, or blank web can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see the relationships among concepts and related information.

Here is an example for NOTE-TAKING Mind Map as Graphic Organizer:

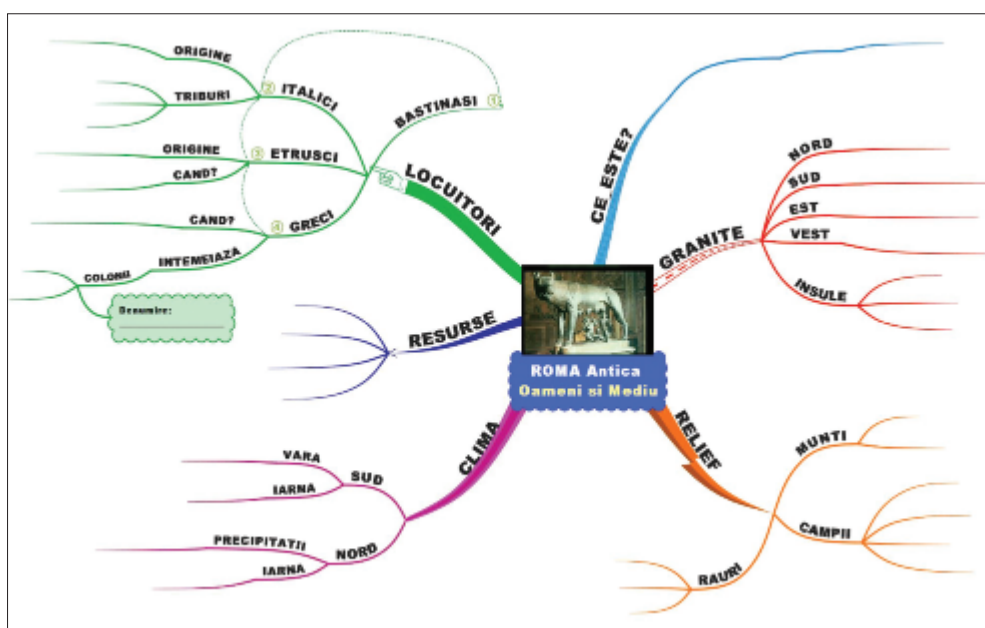


FIG. 3.6. Graphic Organizer "Ancient Rome – People & Environment"

There is no limit to the versatility of the **NOTE-TAKING with Mind Maps**, and a few areas to explore include:

- Reading / listening books
- Watching videos
- Researching
- Study notes

LINK

<https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/effective-note-taking/>

TOOL 4: HANDOUT Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - o (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7
 - o (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7
- **Statement 2:** Promote a "SEN-friendly" Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - o 3.3, 3.4, 3.7
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students' performance
 - o 4.2, 4.3

DESCRIPTION

HANDOUT Mind Maps are especially helpful for "SEN-friendly" classroom. Teachers can use step-by-step instruction, so new or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction. **HANDOUT Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.

- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in secondary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In secondary school

HOW

To create a handout, Teachers can use a template like these:

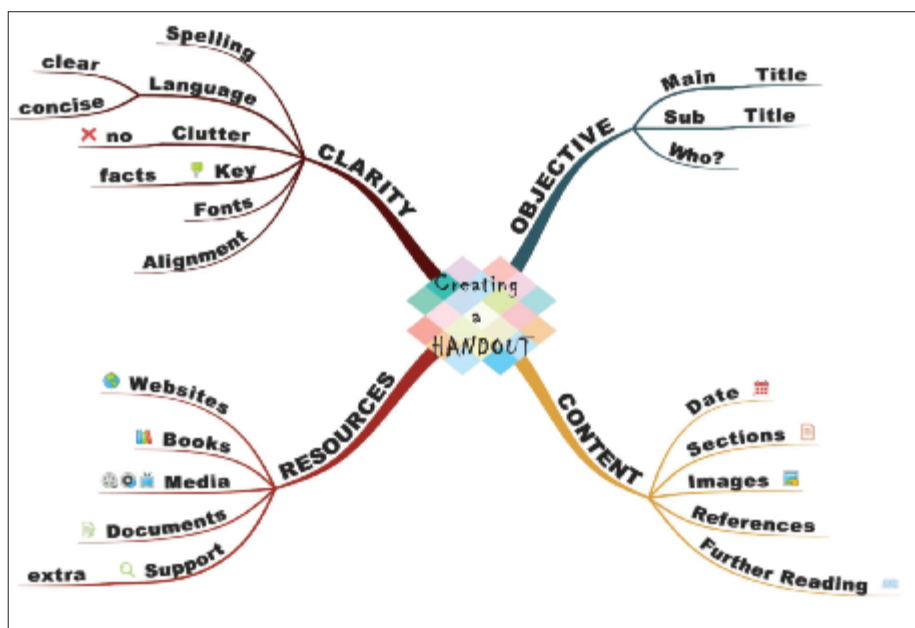


FIG. 4.1 Creating a HANDOUT Mind Map Template

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Use step-by-step instruction.

- New or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Step-by-Step instruction:

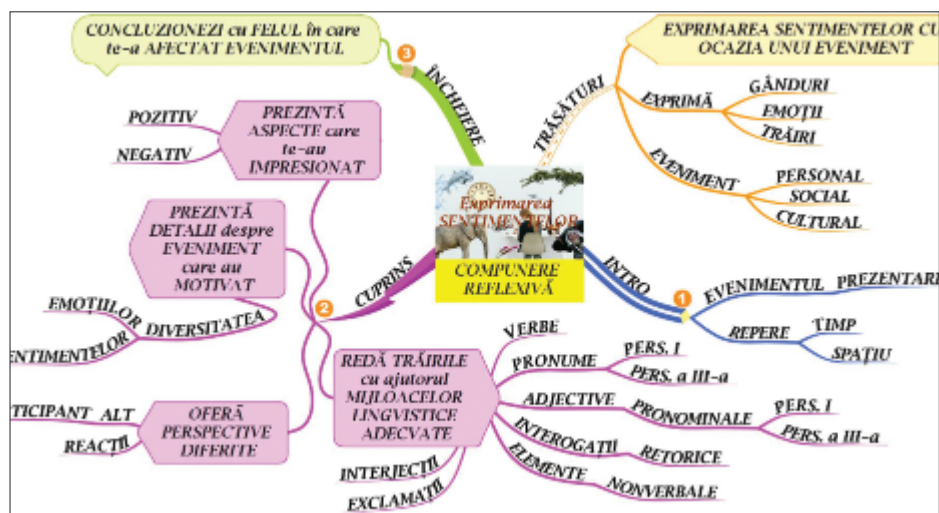


FIG. 4.2 A HANDOUT Mind Map with step-by-step instruction for Reflexive Writing Essay

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.

- Verbal information can be provided with visual displays (e.g., on an overhead or handout).

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Step-by-Step instruction:

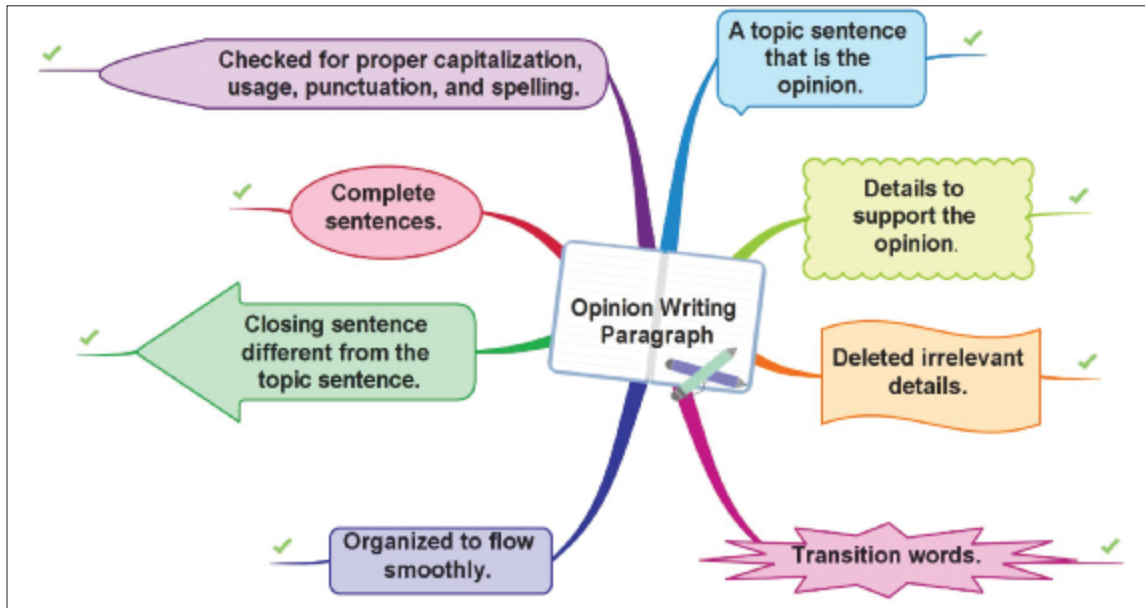


FIG. 4.3 A HANDOUT Mind Map for Opinion Writing Paragraph Check

Use mnemonic instruction.

- Mnemonic devices can be used to help students remember key information or steps in a learning strategy.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Step-by-Step instruction:

RACE is a mnemonic device that helps students write open-ended constructed responses.

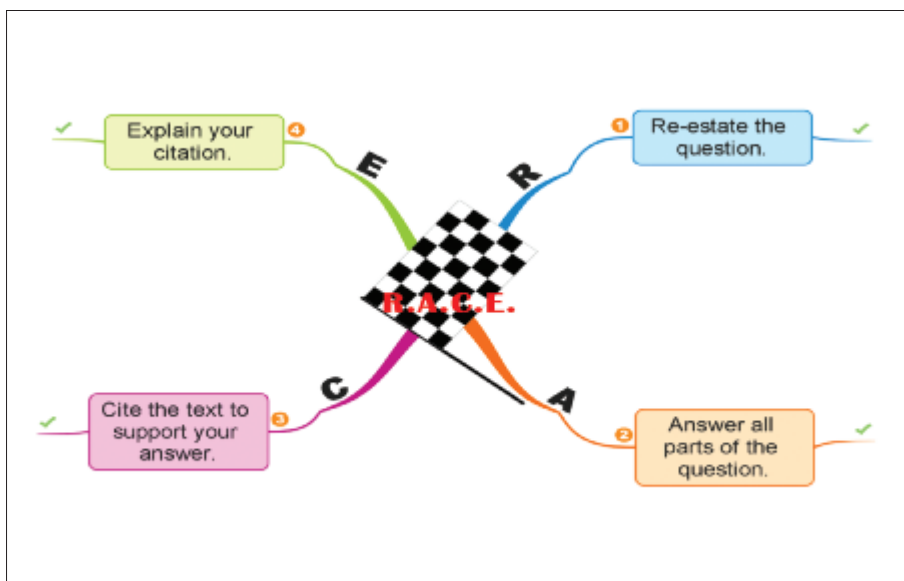


FIG. 4.4 A HANDOUT Mind Map for R.A.C.E. mnemonic device

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Provide an outline of the lesson.

- An outline enables some students to follow the lesson successfully and make appropriate notes. Moreover, an outline helps students to see the organization of the material and ask timely questions.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Outline of the lesson:

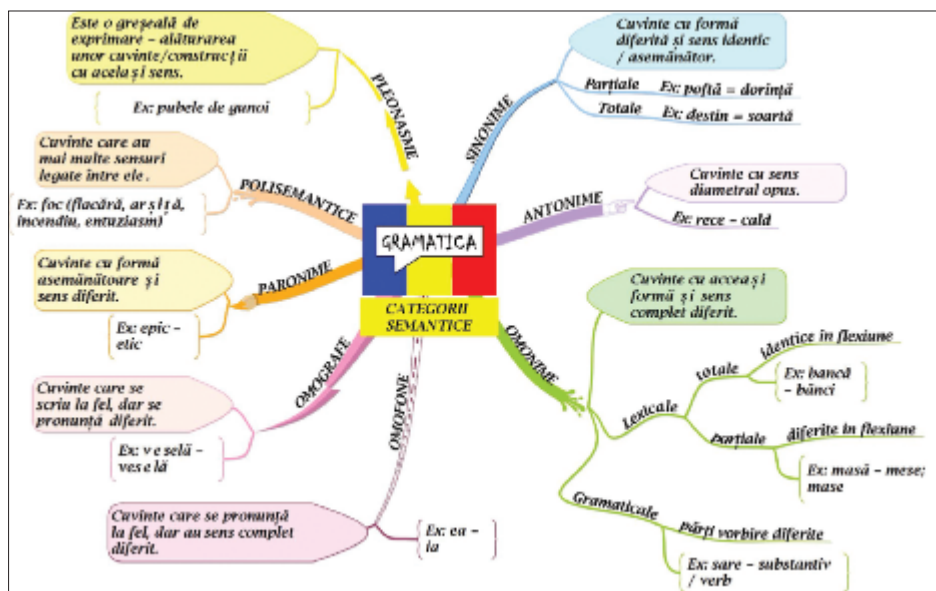


FIG. 4.5 A HANDOUT Mind Map as Outline of the lesson

Encourage use of graphic organizers.

- A graphic organizer involves organizing material into a visual format. To develop a graphic organizer, the student can list the topic on the first line, collect and divide information into major headings, list all information relating to major headings on index cards, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate subheadings, and place information into the organizer format.

Here is an example for HANDOUT Mind Map as Step-by-Step instruction:

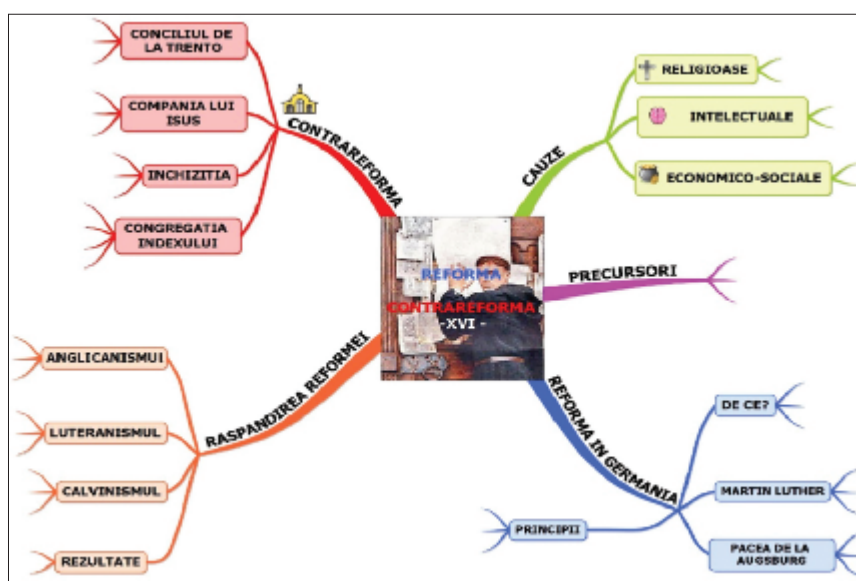


FIG. 4.6 A HANDOUT Mind Map as Graphic organizer of the lesson "Reform & Counter reform"

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

There is no limit to the versatility of the HANDOUT Mind Maps, and a few areas to explore include:

- Note-taking
- Templates
- Strategies
- Tips & Tricks
- Graphic Organizers

LINK

<https://www.ayoa.com/ourblog/using-mind-mapping-for-curriculum-planning/>

TOOL 5: WRITING with Mind Maps

WHY

- **Statement 1:** Use the strengths and address the weaknesses of dyslexic students
 - (+) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.7
 - (-) – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
- **Statement 2:** Promote a “SEN-friendly” Classroom in a Secondary School Environment
- **Statement 3:** Enhance successful interactive instructional activities
 - 3.3, 3.4, 3.5
- **Statement 4:** Involve mode of reception and expression that can be used to enhance students’ performance
 - 4.3, 4.7

DESCRIPTION

WRITING with Mind Maps are especially helpful for “SEN-friendly” classroom. Teachers can use instructional aids, templates, step-by-step instruction, key points to help students write an essay, so new or difficult information can be presented visual, in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction. **WRITING with Mind Maps simultaneously combine verbal and visual information.** Verbal information can be provided with visual displays, like Mind Maps.

OBJECTIVES

- Supporting teachers dealing with heterogeneous learners, including Special Educational Needs students.
- Providing a methodology for helping students with learning difficulties achieve in secondary school education.

TARGET GROUPS

- Secondary school teachers
- Secondary school students with Special Educational Needs

WHEN

- In secondary school

HOW

Some accommodations to enhance successful interactive instructional activities are:

Use step-by-step instruction.

- New or difficult information can be presented in small sequential steps. This helps learners with limited prior knowledge who need explicit or part-to-whole instruction.

Here is an example for **WRITING with Mind Maps as step-by-step instruction**:

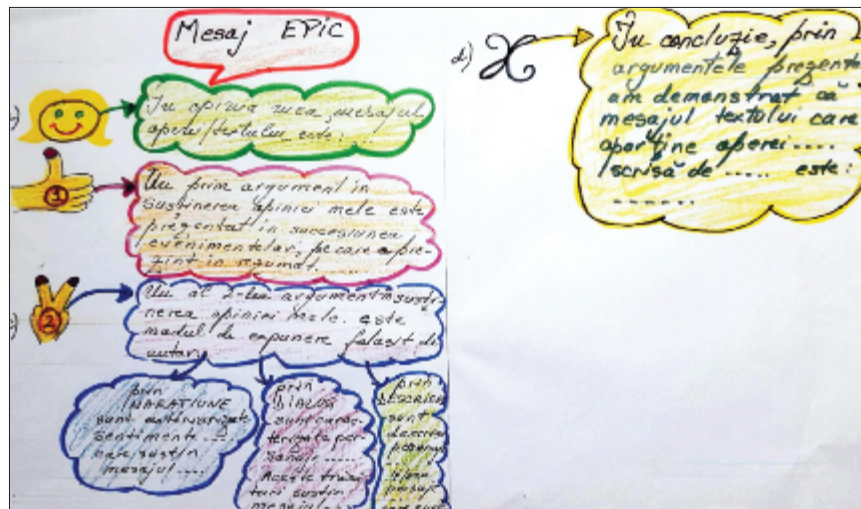


FIG. 5.1 WRITING with Mind Maps as step-by-step instruction for "Reasoning EPIC message"

Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information

- Verbal information can be provided with visual displays (e.g., on an overhead or handout).

Here is an example for WRITING with Mind Maps as a Visual Display Handout:

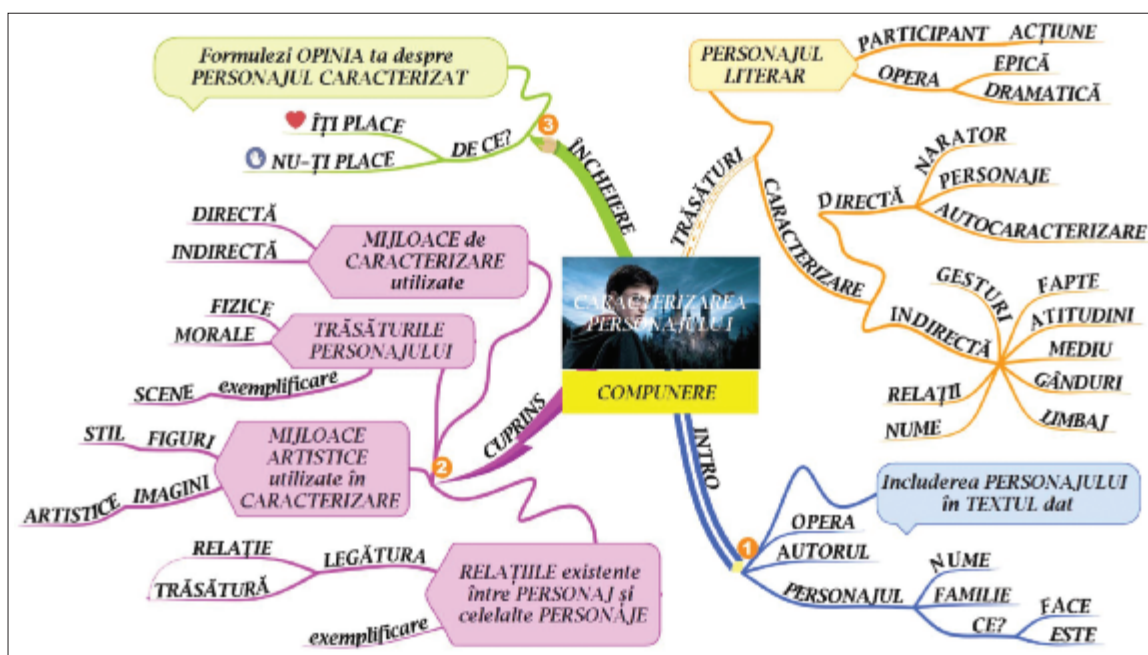


FIG. 5.2 WRITING with Mind Maps as visual display for "Composition – Characterization of the character"

Write key points or words on a handout.

- The teacher will write key points and words on a handout and will provide it to students, prior to writing an essay.

The following accommodation involving mode of reception and expression can be used to enhance students' performance:

Encourage use of graphic organizers.

- A graphic organizer involves organizing material into a visual format. To develop a graphic organizer, the student can list the topic on the first line, collect and divide

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

information into major headings, list all information relating to major headings on index cards, organize information into major areas, place information under appropriate subheadings, and place information into the organizer format.

Here is an example for WRITING with Mind Maps as a Graphic Organizer:

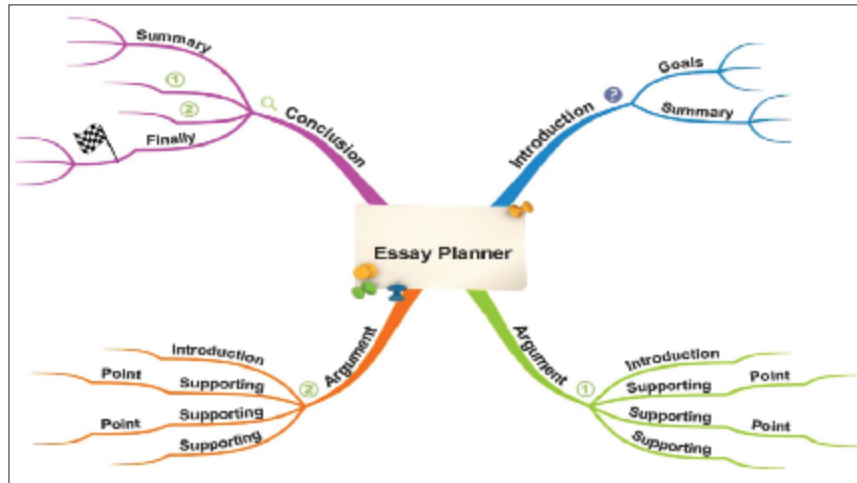


FIG. 5.3 WRITING with Mind Maps as a Graphic Organizer for planning an essay

Allow use of instructional aids.

- Students can be provided with handouts, visual maps, graphic organizers, so that can concentrate on writing, not on structure, sequences, key words.

Here is an example for WRITING with Mind Maps as an Instructional Aid:



FIG. 5.2 WRITING with Mind Maps as visual display for "Composition – Characterization of the character"

LINK

<https://www.mindmeister.com/blog/mind-maps-essay-writing/>

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



RESPONDING TO THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF SEN STUDENTS: TEACHERS' TRAINING NEEDS

GREECE
GREECE
GREECE



"SEN-friendly" class in the school. Inclusive Education/ Inclusion

Every child's education is a fundamental right in a just society. Accessibility is a quality indicator for a school that develops learning support mechanisms for each student. By replacing older terms such as integration and incorporation, inclusion has come to express a new political orientation for continuous improvement of school, based at the principle of equity and values such as respect for diversity, rights and needs of all of children without exception.

Inclusion of children with and without special educational needs (SEN) shapes frameworks and teaching practices that perceive individual differences not as a problem but as an opportunity to enrich the teaching and learning process (Unesco, 1994).

This means that the curriculum is not the restrictive limit, which if a student one cannot follow, is puts out of general education. On the contrary, the curriculum, the methods and techniques, the procedures are 35 Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union 2018 – 1- RO01-KA201-049489 characterized by flexibility and are appropriately adapted to the extent necessary to meet the needs of all students. The term inclusion was proposed to describe the quality of education offered to children with SEN in the framework of the general school with the co-ordination of general and special education teachers (Zisimopoulos, 2011).

Today, most pupils with special educational needs attend public schools of general education (implementation of the principle of inclusive or equal chances education for all) and they are provided with additional or parallel teaching support in the classroom. There are also structures of integration for some categories of children as noted before.

Students with disabilities and special educational needs in Greece, can attend: In a class of the general/mainstream school, if they are students with mild learning difficulties, supported by the class teacher, who cooperates on a case-by-case basis with the KESY.

In a school class of the general school, with the parallel support/co-education, by special education teachers, when this is imposed by the type and degree of special educational needs. Parallel support is provided to students who can, with appropriate individual support, attend the classroom's curriculum, to students with more severe educational needs, when there is no other special education setting (special school, integration department) or when parallel support is necessary - based on the KESY report - because of their special educational needs. In the latter case, support from a specialist teacher can be provided on a permanent and planned basis.

Parallel support is suggested only by the relevant KESY which, in writing, determines the hours of parallel support on a case-by-case basis for every SEN pupil.

In specially organized and suitably staffed Integration Departments, operating in general

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

and vocational education schools with two (2) different types of programs:

1. A common and specialized program, defined by a proposal of the relevant KESY, for pupils with more mild special educational needs
2. Specialized group or personalized extended program

Teachers and schools

Special education teachers believe that further education and training on a regular base is very important for their work, as our world is characterized by rapid, dynamic changes in all aspects of life and education cannot remain static.

What Greek SEN teachers found very critical was the need to be trained together with teachers of typical classes on how to work together in the class (special education teachers and teachers). This is the case in parallel support, but this becomes also a necessity if we are to adopt more inclusive approaches. The cooperation between them is not always easy and more training is needed in order to specify each one's duties and the terms of this cooperation and to promote mutual respect and understanding.

Moreover, most of the teachers who participated to the Focus Groups expressed their need to be trained in new and innovative methods and techniques of how to teach SEN students (especially students with Special Learning Disorders- Dyslexia, ADHD and Developmental Disorders-Autism). They would prefer not only an e-learning course, which is also important, but also to have a more personal perspective and guidance.

Moreover, almost all participants stated their need to be trained on how to support parents of SEN students, how to communicate with them effectively and help them accept their child's difficulty and find ways of helping it with homework. Teachers feel the need learn more about the terms of cooperation with parents in order to actively involve them in a school-parents partnership.

Finally, some teachers expressed the need to learn ways and methods to identify SEN students in class.



RESPONDING TO THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF SEN STUDENTS: TEACHERS' TRAINING NEEDS

IRELAND
IRELAND
IRELAND



"SEN-friendly" class in the school. Inclusive Education/ Inclusion

Regarding the *early identification of children at risk (pre-school)* most of the teachers participating in the project reported that there was a severe lack of this in relation to dyslexia. There was acceptance that this was difficult to do at pre-school as the formal processes of reading and writing were not taught. There was therefore agreement that this should be something carried out in the period after 18-30 months of formal schooling. Ideally a screening process should take place from the second half of the second year to the first half of the third year. Some participants suggested that a phonics-check "like they are proposing in England and Australia, would be a simple and effective way of picking up most dyslexia."

But there were unanimous of the teachers in giving the support for early intervention for all SEN and cited the evidence base supporting the positive impacts made when this is put in place.

The formal diagnosis process was criticized by all the participants in the project. Part of the teachers took the view that there should be far more formal assessment available to them (for dyslexia and SEN as a whole) from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). They bemoaned the fact that only two or three assessments are available per year (for a medium sized primary school) and that this represented the allocation for all SEN, and often 'lower-tariff' needs such as dyslexia were very rarely at the top of this list.

There was a recognition that having a formal diagnosis (and paperwork) was still going to be important as it allowed an individual access to a set of protected rights in both their education and future employment (and other aspects of life), under the disability and equality legislation at both national and European level (e.g. employment law, disability discrimination process).

The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004) was regularly referred to. It was highlighted that this created a real 'eddy' in SEN provision, in that real progress was made legislatively with this law but the lack of political will to enact it has led to many of the issues atrophying and being 'put on the long finger' or 'kicked into the long grass'. There was acknowledgement of other policy changes (e.g. the move to a general allocation of SEN resources, and various other circular changes) but it was felt that these only served to 'muddy the water' further, rather than provide clarity for schools, professionals and parents. One teacher suggested that 'a qualified barrister would find it hard to advocate successfully for their disabled child' given the complexity and inconsistency of the guidance and legislative (or lack of) protections. It was felt that (unlike many other European jurisdictions) parents were forced to raise SEN issues through generic channels of appeal (e.g. the courts or more general public complaints routes like the Children's Ombudsman) rather than processes set up specifically for children with SEN and disabilities. Teachers made a point of often different disabilities being forced to fight for the same pool of limited resources, and often this led to disability organisations fighting between themselves, rather than working together to make the case for more resources and better systems for allocating and monitoring how they are used. The participants at the project stressed that there was not enough rigour or oversight on

SEN provision in schools from statutory bodies like the Inspectorate for Education. There was a need for individual school inspections to make specific efforts to access the views of parents of children with SEN, and more specifically focus on the provision (assessment, intervention and planning thereof) in each school.

Curricular modification was discussed at length during the project. It was felt that there was still a real lack of any meaningful differentiation in most classrooms in primary school, and as such the landscape for ‘doing things differently, for children who learn differently’ was not ‘well-trod’. Specific mention was made of textbook driven learning and ‘differentiating only by outcome, which can be deeply challenging for a child’s self-esteem if they are constantly feeling that they are doing worse than everybody else’.

At second level there is still a dependence on providing reasonable accommodations around state exams – reflecting the dependence on this metric as a measure of meaningful achievement at secondary level. There was concern about the values placed on a tiered system as very value laden “The LCA [Leaving Certificate Applied] is stigmatised in my school, so that even before you start the race, the gold medal is not that valued”. Similar comments included: “The school system is still 100% designed to reward and value neurotypical learning profiles. Any neurodiversity is treated with benign disdain and the kids are left in no doubt about that, often leading to damaged self-esteem from which they may not recover in a post-school environment”.

There was a lot of positivity about the range and quality of services provided out of school for children with SEN, and again dyslexia specifically. However, comment was made in the working groups that a lot of these services were not always what could be described as ‘extra-curricular (e.g. swimming or social outings) but instead often provided services that were more likely ‘intra-curricular’ (e.g. literacy lessons or social skills training), and/or that should be provided by the state at no extra cost (e.g. like respite care for families). It was highlighted that the not-for-profit/charity sector provided many services that would be provided by the state itself in other jurisdictions. However, it was also highlighted that some funding for many of these bodies is provided by the government with the explicit demand that these resources are used to provide these services.

Dependence on volunteerism, whilst seen as an endearing aspect (‘you know that the people involved are doing it for the right reasons’) of such provision, can lead to issues with clear quality assurance and governance. It was also commented on that the supports being provided in these settings, whilst often of a very high quality, are often not coordinated with what is happening in more general provision in school, and often the burden of organisation and information sharing is left to parents, which can be a challenge if parents are already overburdened due to the nature of their child’s difficulty or disability (or if they have a disability e.g. severe dyslexia) themselves.

The conclusion is that the **USEFUL/NECESSARY COMPETENCES AND SKILLS FOR TEACHERS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION** are:

- understanding of SEN categories
- critical thinking
- reflective practice, using a response to intervention model
- understanding of assessment processes to (1) identify students in need, and (2) monitor response to intervention
- flexibility in responding to individual student’s needs
- a cooperative and whole-school approach and ethos towards inclusion
- inclusion of parents and students as active partners
- cooperation with other teachers to share examples of good practice, useful tools and approaches
- empathy and positivity, having a strong sense of belief that students can and will make progress

RESPONDING TO THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF SEN STUDENTS: TEACHERS' TRAINING NEEDS

ITALY
ITALY
ITALY



"SEN-friendly" class in the school. Inclusive Education/ Inclusion

The Italian legislation framework on Special Educational Needs (SEN) supports the empowerment of all subjects involved in the educational process, according to a pedagogical point of view, in order to promote more inclusive practices and to counter stereotypes, discriminations and inequalities in school education.

It defines as SEN a wide range of permanent or temporary needs at school: disabilities, specific learning disorders, specific developmental disorders, socio-economic, cultural or linguistic disadvantages.

All students with SEN are integrated in mainstreaming education, even if there are a few special institutes for pupils who are blind and deaf, as well as schools with specific tasks in the field of education for pupils with particularly severe disabilities.

The legislation specifies the educational and didactic measures to be applied from pre-primary education to support the correct process of teaching and learning (i.e. screening, diagnosis and certification, early detection in schools, personalised education plans etc).

Specifically, "for almost all pupils with special educational needs in the Italian school system, the law provides for the drafting of tailored educational plans which allow them to improve their abilities and knowledge, based on their own skills and the predicted area of improvement. They are called [...] personalised didactic plans (PDP) and are drafted by teachers, medical staff, parents and other professional figures involved in the pupil's education/life"¹.

While to students with disabilities is recognised the right to have at disposal a specialist and/or a support teacher, the other students with SEN have at disposal their curricular teachers who are called to plan and implement specific compensative and dispensator measures allowing them to participate in didactic activities with the whole class.

Moreover, each school draws up a specific Inclusion Plan within the framework of a Three-Year Educational Plan (PTOF). School teaching and non-teaching staff will also be provided according to the school Inclusion Plan, and the Assessment of school inclusiveness has been introduced in the school evaluation.

Anyway, although the Legislation framework represents one of the more inclusive and complete in the European panorama, in recent years there has been a growing gap between what the legislation says and its application (i.e. failure to respect the maximum limit of 20 pupils in classes attended by pupils with disabilities; failure to take effectively charge of the PDP by many curricular teachers; lack of initial and compulsory training in service of the curricular teachers on inclusive teaching; lack of cooperation between the regional and local health authorities).

¹ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Country information for Italy - Systems of support and specialist provision, 2018 (<https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/italy/systems-of-support-and-specialist-provision>)

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

Therefore, the actual implementation of the Legislation is still too much delegated to the professional commitment of teachers and school managers, as well as dependent on the complexity of the needs to be faced in each school/class and on available resources both in terms of professionals and funds. Farther, often the school system doesn't facilitate the cooperation among teachers, emphasizing competitiveness.

In this light, exchange and training actions as the ones included in MAGIC SENS take on a significant value.

Teachers and schools

Given the Italian legislation framework and the difficulties in its actual implementation, inclusive education in school have to be based mainly on teachers and on listening and collaboration within class boards, although in most cases the school does not offer an adequate environment to do it.

Teachers need competences, tools and occasions for confronting each other on the adopted strategies and tools. In the class board there are different points of view, therefore it is a very rich environment for collaboration and exchange: a good practice about listening could be established so as to lead to the dissemination of effective teaching practices through simulation and exploitation.

According to this perspective, the main emerging teachers' training needs in Italy are linked to the following areas of competence:

- Critical thinking
- Cooperation with colleagues
- Spirit of Initiative
- Flexibility in setting and implementing teaching strategies, adapting to students' need
- Understanding of students' needs
- Management of the relationship with parents
- Exchange between teachers on good practices, methodologies and tools
- Active listening

TEACHERS' TRAINING NEEDS

ROMANIA
ROMANIA
ROMANIA



"SEN-friendly" class in the school. Inclusive Education/ Inclusion

The whole educational system based on competition and accumulation of theoretical knowledge and missing the necessary support structure (pointed curriculum adaptation, well trained professionals, etc) creates difficulties for a real inclusion of children with SEN in ordinary classes/ schools. This situation generates a continuous conflictual state between parents and the school and between teachers themselves (those who accept to work with children with SEN feel overload because, even if the Law indicate a decreasing of the children allocated in a class who has a child with SEN, this not happen). The rare success stories are rather due to the individual efforts of dedicated and talented teachers that meet cooperating parents to support and sustain their effort.

There is a difference between the way teachers in primary schools can approach different SEN cases, as they have more time for the child, they can observe every changes and reaction of the student.

The special case of TSI children became more obvious for teachers of primary schools as they are the first who can observe the specific difficulties of these pupils, compared to their peers, even if they do not present problematic behaviours or general difficulties to be considered as SEN students. The lack of information or cooperation with parents in order to let these children to be evaluated and certified can have an important impact on the development of the child and create major difficulties in upper classes.

In this situation, most of the participants at the project REQUESTED specific training focus on:

- methods to identify the children with TSI,
- working tools in classroom,
- how to approach the parents and transfer of some competencies necessary to work and communicate with the parents and specialists (e.g. – speech therapist)
- how to approach the issue with the rest of the parents and the children.

Positive experiences are very individual. Teachers that followed trainings or just studied for personal professional purpose different topics related with SEN and recently with TSI testified about methods they used in class for their students, in order to encourage those with children with special educational needs to integrate in group and feel more accepted.

There are mentions about multisensory approaches, working in groups, integrating the SEN children to the group, interactive didactic teaching, learning by playing in order to compensate the eventual difficulty of the children, etc. There is no general rule, every teacher is trying to find an appropriate method that should include also the SEN children.

We noted also positive reactions at school management level, as there are managers interested to open their school for inclusion and experiment new teaching methods.

SEN Toolkit for Teachers

Regarding the TSI, on one hand, the legal provisions are more generous and efficient at ECE and primary level the teachers are more able to experiment different methods, but there is still an important hesitation at secondary and high school level, on the other hand, the lack of real understanding of the role of compensation instruments (as computer writing, mapping of information, oral evaluation, etc) generates a lot of problems.

The positive discrimination of the TSI students is not yet very well understood, as the paradox of these intelligent children with important learning failures is not yet well explained to the teachers and to the classmates

An effective inclusion depends on the cooperation of parents - school – specialists and by the support provided by the authorities in terms of legal provisions, training, funds for teaching instruments and professionals.

Teachers and schools

Teachers need very specific and pointed training and effective support of specialists for a better understanding of each need.

Unfortunately, inclusive practice shows how difficult this partnership can be achieved in our schools. If the child has attached a general label as “SEN” or even “TSI”, the teacher can generalize or excessively minimize children’s difficulties. Very often the teachers design repetitive, easy tasks for the child, are not able to observe the positive aspects as they are under the influence of the daily failures experimented by these children, until a progress is eventually done.

Teachers try to find on spot solutions, such as different tests with average difficulty level, support classmates for SEN students, using modern technology/ video lessons, etc. but this kind of intervention is not coherent, professional and systematic.

It is obviously that teachers need:

- a better and more effective support of specialists (there should be more emphasis on the role of school counsellor and/ or psychologist);
- specialized trainings;
- to benefit by the law provision who specified that the number of students in class must be reduced, if the teacher has a one or more students with SEN/ TSI;
- and, to an important reform regarding the curricula for all students, more flexible and adequate to all capacity levels of students.

Some teachers would prefer students with very difficult situation of SEN in special classes integrated in mainstream school, but the practice has not been successful until now.

There is also an emergency for early identification of learning difficulties, mainly of TSI risks. *A screening program and training on this screening should be very helpful for primary school teachers.*

A basic training focus on in this area is very urgent as this category of students (excepting the very complex cases) has the best chances to be fast integrated good results, if the teachers using the appropriate methods.

Teachers asked to be trained on follow topics: teaching methods with practical examples, integrate the new technologies in teaching, teaching tools. The specific request for training was to be an interactive and practical approach.

The Ministry of Education should be more active in supporting teachers and parental initiatives and involve itself in creating a real inclusion environment, as the simple policy statement is not enough.

After school programs for students with SEN, centres for re-education financed by the State/ local administration should relieve the pressure that the mainstream school is facing when try to integrate the students from this category.

Romania has still a lot to do, but there is potential and we, as an ONG, together with FSLI, have experienced many times during trainings and conferences, how effective this cooperation can be.

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Resources & References

RESOURCES

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