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Current priorities of the program content ‘Around the world’, for first and second grade in primary school, with an accent inclusive education

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Abstract. Positive changes in the educational system of Bulgaria towards the process of inclusion, namely to ensure equal access to quality education for each child, regardless of his health or social status, ethnic or religious affiliation, also reflect on the program content of “Around the world” for first and second grade in primary school. The subject is aimed at enriching the sensory cognitive experience of children, as well as mastering related to their close public and social environment, knowledge and skills. By accepting a social role student, the child learns another type of interaction with others, acquires the skills to listen and talk with his interlocutors, focus on tasks. The current program content of the learning themes focuses on priorities such as: skills of deal with problems, communication with other students and manifestation of tolerant relationships, and acceptance of differences. The artistic-illustrative material depicting events, situations, circumstances of everyday life of students, bringing them closer to reality. Tasks require students to work independently: monitoring, research, data collection, sharing personal experiences, group work, and this promotes the development of their intellectual potential, as well as successful adaptation, socialization and inclusion in society.

1. Introduction.

The change in educational patterns, namely the aim of ensuring equal access to quality education for each child, regardless of his or her health or social status, ethnic and religious affiliation, is related to the process of inclusion, which directs our attention to accepting and respecting the uniqueness of each child and disciple, namely his or her individual needs and abilities, personal qualities, knowledge, skills and interests. The need for modern society by individuals with skills and competences to deal with problems and situations requiring non-standard solutions, understanding and tolerance for differences, partnership and cooperation, is tied to the current priorities of the program content of the curricula of the first and second grade textbooks and school kits approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, namely, students to gain information, knowledge, through their continuous interaction with the teacher, classmates, from the near and distant environment, acquiring social skills and competences aimed at forming the cognitive and social horizons needed for a full life and successful socialization, or as S. Julzari writes: ‘Interaction of the person with the environment is a basic characteristic of his life path.’ [4, p. 9] There are available but insufficient studies on this topic, for example, R. Engels-Kritidis writes the following: ‘Thus, a matter for some serious analysis is the fact that none of the participating students (not even the ones with special educational needs: in total 4 out of 72, one visually-impaired and three hard-of-hearing) have pointed out in any way the specific skills that teachers must have with relation to integrating children with special educational needs. After researching the study plans and curriculums, a possible reason for this fact may be that none of the students have any mandatory modules related to the specifics of inclusive preschool education;

there is only an elective module on 'Integration of children with problems (social, emotional, health)' which is non-mandatory and was not attended by any of the participating students.' [2, p. 86]

2. Exposure.

Training in the subject 'Around the world' in the first and second grades of the primary school, '... is aimed at forming the foundations of the student's personality - achieving not only knowledge and information, but also understanding the psychic qualities and characteristics of the child. The specific thing about it is that the student personality must be considered as individual, original and kind.' [1, p. 23], which is in line with the philosophy of inclusive education. All this contributes, to the realization of the student's personality goals and tasks, related to the formation of key cognitive, practical and communicative skills, and to his spiritual, and moral strengthening, by mastering the peculiarities of the concrete, immediate, life, social environment with which it continuously interacts. Formation of psychic education in the student personality is related to four spheres. According to J. Doncheva these are:

- 'cognitive sphere - knowledge, information, knowledge of certain objects, groups of objects, links between objects, properties and features of the objects. Knowledge is the important (meaningful) ingredient, so to speak, the 'filling', 'the material' in relation to which the tasks of the other three spheres are carried out;
 - intellectual sphere - mastering mental resources, mental operations, intellectual skills, ways of manipulating information with intelligence and understanding, understanding, summarizing;
 - social - moral and aesthetic sphere - can be called emotional, as far as working on it is formed a child's meditative attitude towards the environment, what social - moral and aesthetic values he sees in her, how he cope with himself, as a result of the impact of the environment on him.'
- [1, pp. 23-24]

The achievement of the pupils' developing personality is achieved through the program content of the curriculum of the textbooks and study sets approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). They are compiled by the authors' collections of Anubis, Bulvest 2000, Pythagoras, Prosveta AzBuKi, Prosveta Plus and Prosveta Sofia and have the following appearance: structure of the annual thematic distribution - global themes and subtopics. They are in direct contact with each other and meet the requirements for expected learning outcomes in different areas of competence. Each of the areas of competence reflects state education standards (SES) or the claims of the public and the state to what knowledge, and skills need to be formed in the pupils, after completing the first and second grades of elementary school. For them M. Stoyanova writes: 'The key competencies are knowledge and skills, attitudes and valuation relationships, without which it is not possible to carry out an activity, behaviour, decision. They have a significant duration and provide variants of adaptive behaviour, action or decision in different situations.' [7, p. 14] Textbook builders and training kits have developed the program content of the themes, focusing on the social world of children and fully in the context of inclusive education in the following areas of competence: **'Homeland', 'The man and his environment', 'National and cultural heritage', 'Man and the healthy way of life'**. Achieving the expected results in each of the educational cores is based on the teacher's freedom to choose the ways and means of work and the freedom of the students to make their own observations, both inside and outside the classroom. By studying the themes from area of competence: **'Homeland'**, students are expected to acquire the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

- describes his or her school and the roles of the people in it, including his or her own;
- connects family members with their roles and responsibilities;
- lists his or her rights and duties in the family and in the school;
- describes the location of the settlement in which the nature lives in the native land;
- distinguishes the school as an institution and community of students, teachers and parents;
- illustrates by way of example the meaning of the person's belonging to the family and the country. [5]

The forecasted learning outcomes are achieved through the curriculum developed by the authors' collectives and the artistic and illustrating materials depicting the objects in their real form and the situations surrounding the children's reality, thereby reinforcing their authenticity. The requirement for a verbal description of the portrayal of the pupils encourages them to actively communicate. The self-fulfilment of the proposed tasks of observation, research, comparison leads to the understanding by the children of themselves as subjects in communication with parents, teachers, peers, awareness, that they are part of their family, showing affection, respect, tolerance to the people in the environment they interact with, understanding the importance of the care and protection they receive from their family and parents. It gives them an opportunity to sense their belonging to the school, as well as the need for the institution, the benefits of education, recognizing the social role of a student. They acquire skills to enumerate rights and obligations at home and at school, learn partnerships and collaboration with others, and this is a prerequisite for improving their social and communicative skills as well as inclusion in class, school and society. Awareness of belonging to the Motherland has helped to form civic consciousness, honor, love and affection.

Educational core **'The man and his environment'** contains themes, the study of which the pupils should acquire the following knowledge, skills and competences:

- explains the need to comply with rules in society - at home, at school, on the street, in public places;
- distinguish the dangerous and safe behaviour of the child as a participant in the street movement;
- indicates an adequate response to life and health-related situations in disasters, accidents, incidents;
- points out important public and natural sites in the settlement;
- understands that people have different points of view and we need to know them so that we can live together;
- has a tolerant attitude in communicating with the different. [5]

The resources offered in the training kits reflect actual phenomena from the life of the people, which imply a verbal description, sharing of personal experience and opinion from the students, as well as suggestions for possible ways to solve the problems that arise, and this is a prerequisite for the development of speech and communicative skills. Learning assignments require students to understand the right behaviours in protection and protecting life in critical situations, distinguishing between danger and safety, demonstrating road-marking skills, signs, signals, indications. The self-fulfilment of the tasks requires students to show observability, flexibility, and group - partnership and cooperation, tolerance, understanding, acceptance of foreign perspectives for successful inclusion in a world full of differences.

'National and cultural heritage' is the educational core, the study of which implies the formation of students' knowledge and skills for:

- recognition of national symbols flag, anthem, coat of arms;
- distinguishing official and domestic holidays in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- gives examples of celebrities and events related to the past and present of the native country. [5]

The observation of the illustrations and paintings in the textbooks, depicting the national symbols of the flag and coat of arms, emblematic personalities and events from the past of the country, monuments, sights, allows students to understand how the surrounding world operates, raising their pride and self-esteem, respect and respect country. The verbal description of the depictions of domestic and official holidays fosters the skills to distinguish them, to improve the speech and communicative ones, and to consider the celebration as a national element. The variety of learning tasks for connecting, comparing, painting, colouring, applying, creating drawers, collages are related to the formation of aesthetic taste and attitude to the beautiful.

By studying the themes of educational core **'Man and the healthy way of life'**, students are expected to acquire the following knowledge and skills:

- names the essential parts of the human body and sensory organs of man;
- lists rules for a healthy lifestyle and nutrition;
- lists human activities related to environmental protection. [5]

The illustrations, pictures, and schematics included in the textbook and school kits are tailored to the age and experience of the students, offering information to support the development of knowledge. The learning tasks are for self and group performance - observation, verbal description - sharing of personal experience and opinion, painting, colouring, applying, posters, boards, mock-ups. They contribute to the awareness of the need to adopt healthy foods, adherence to the daily regime, the practice of sports to prevent disease, and the importance of responsible behaviour of students towards environmental protection, all of which are prerequisites for the acquisition of speech, communicative and practical skills necessary for successful inclusion in class and society.

3. Conclusion

From what has been said so far, we can summarize that the current priorities of the first and second grade program content in the primary school are in line with the philosophy of inclusive education, namely, ensuring equal access to quality education for every child, regardless of his or her health or social status, ethnic or religious affiliation, accepting and respecting his or her individual needs and abilities, personal qualities, knowledge, skills, interests and, as written by V. Petrova 'requires didactic approaches and solutions that allow the pupil to share, meditate and express his own attitude'. [6, p. 13] The subject is aimed at developing the sensory cognitive experience of the students, related to their close society and social environment. The variety of study tasks to monitor, compare, connect, apply, draw, draw up, collage, modelling helps to master the actual knowledge and skills of students - showing tolerant relationships, acceptance of differences, listening, communication, partnership and collaboration with others students. The artistic and illustrating material is consistent with the students' age and experience, depicting events, situations, circumstances, phenomena from their everyday life, bringing them closer to reality. The wide range of methods and tools used by the teacher - narrative, talk, discussion, excursion, observation, demonstration as well as the inclusion of various didactic and role-playing games that help to obtain a clear and complete picture of the surrounding world, acquiring knowledge, practical skills and the competences of the pupils needed for a full life, inclusion in class and successful socialization in society. State standards, educational content, topics, subtopics, textbooks, materials, resources, etc. everything is in the 'hands of the teacher', his mastery to pass on to the young generation the accumulated life experience. His responsibility to the public, the nation, his duty as V.Ivanova says consists of: 'The dynamics and the complexity of the ongoing social, economic, political and other changes impose a new vision about the children with a different attitude and style of the pedagogical interaction. The challenges to the education, the preschool education and the pedagogue increase. The personal and professional profile of the contemporaneous teacher is actualized according to the needs of the internal and external pedagogical environment projecting in advance on the social life the processes influenced directly by it. The pedagogue is expected to create optimal conditions stimulating the favourable development and training of the children preparing them for a world where the mankind as a whole and the particular individual will live according to the laws of a mutual harmonic inclusion into the whole built on the internal mutual dependence. Some of our and foreign studies describe the tendency for an increased number of parents sharing the opinion that the only place for the education of their child is the institutionally organized environment. The reasons may be found in the lack of time and experience in the communication and the professional engagements.' [3, pp. 56-57]

The up-to-date priorities of the 'Around the world' program content in the first and second grades of primary school, with an emphasis on inclusive education, can by no means be exhausted by what has been said so far. Our quests, research and analyses continue because students, parents and our entire society are in dynamic processes that multiply to the best for learners, sustainability,

positivity and practical application of the absorption and consolidation of information from the learning process.

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