COMPARED EFFECTS OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING VERSUS INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ON THE SCHOOL PROGRESS OF THE PUPILS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The current concerns of the Romanian education determine the extension of the researchers' concerns from the differentiation of the learning to its individualizing. In the present study we conducted a research project, using the experiment method. We aimed to analyze the impact of the individual organizing of the learning and of the individualized one on second grade pupils' achievement. The sample's research consisted of 2 teachers, primary school teachers, and 56 pupils of class II. The control group consisted of 27 pupils from the same class who have worked for individual learning. The experiential group was represented by 29 pupils from another class, having the same level of education. This group achieved an individualized learning. The results obtained the pupils of the two groups to final assessment test proved the efficiency of the individualized learning situations organizing at the expense of the individual learning.*

Keywords: *individualized learning, individual learning, effects, progress.*

1. Introduction

The organizing of the pupil centered learning situations is beneficial to the development of formative aspect of the learning situations by driving the capabilities and managerial skills of the teacher to organize pupil-centered learning situations, adapting the situational context represented by the totality of subjective and objective factors, the teaching strategy, the tackled methodology - to each pupil, and not just to a group of pupils or to a whole – classroom group of pupils.

1.1. *The comparative analysis of the individual and individualized learning situations*

The school should be seen as a means of cultivating pupil's respect being staked one fundamental value - the individuality - individuals should be treated as autonomous, complex, fluctuating, with a special sensitivity (C. Cucoş 2005, p.104).

Starting from the confusion between the terms of *the individual* and *individualized learning*, Jean Vial prefers the term "custom work" (J.Vial 1976, p.240) in order to describe the work individually done, but with differentiated content. For a differentiate instruction, the content of the individually carried out activity must be adapted to each pupil possibilities.

The individualized learning situations should not be understood only as processes of adaptation of the educational content, methods and patterns of work of pupils' possibilities, these ones assuming the stimulation of the development process of each pupil, underlining the formative function of this process.

Learning situation's requirements should stimulate pupils' growth, rationally surpassing their possibilities, systematically soliciting them in surpassing.

The individualizing of the instruction shifts the emphasis from teacher's teaching activity, which was a reality of the traditional education and still has influences today, to what L.Legrand (1984, p.59) calls *pupil's directed activity*. Thus, without being completely abandoned, the collective work of teaching-learning of information is supplemented by small groups individualized activities or individually done.

Learning individualizing is determined by the orientation of the training to meet different learning rhythms of pupils. If differentiation refers to "how learning is done", the individualization is oriented towards "when this one is done". In this case, the purpose of training remains the same for the group of pupils, who can progress in their own rhythm, as a result of the specific needs of learning. The individualizing supports the learning activity both of those who need to recap some knowledge, and those who have mastered these concepts proving capacities for deepening and developing of some topics. In differentiated instruction, the learning strategies are based on pupil readiness, on the learning style, the best interests and practices. Thus, each pupil is supported to master skills he will need to meet the educational standards.

G. Clauss (1977) considers that the individual treating requires to the pupils that each of them to seek individually for a solution without time pressure and competition. For pupils with poor results is necessarily, beside the worksheets, to be given the minimum of helpful information for an active and efficient solution. Each of them requires a different amount of helpful information.

In case of independent learning, the educator states the task in a frontal way, for all pupils equally, pupils solve individually, formulating their own responses, and at the final there is synthesized a response by analyzing pupil responses.

In the individualized learning situation there are created by teacher tasks adapted to each pupil's personality structure, reporting them to the assimilated knowledge and to the forming way of their training skills. Each pupil solves the task, responding through a resolution of his own.

Căprioară D. (2013) sustains that learning individualizing must begin by harmonizing the learning process content, of the instruction strategies, organizing ways that must achieve common goals for all pupils participating in learning process.

In this sense, Popescu M. (2013) states that „through this organizing way it is passing from a school for all to a school for everyone. From the perspective of the teacher, the differentiation is related to the contents, teaching methods, psychological environment and performance standards" (Popescu, 2013, p.110).

1.2.Learning situation's adaptation to the psychological profile of the pupil

Theoretically, we proposed to study the characteristics of the individual learning and of the individualized one, as well as the issues on the differential treatment and learning motivation as prerogatives of pupil-centered learning situations.

Thus, in the differentiated learning, the teacher becomes *pupils' counselor*, organizing the learning activity, modeling the pedagogical action after pupil's capabilities and abilities of development, stimulating at maximum pupils' personal activities within a process of individualization of the instruction.

The differential treatment is required by many differences that arise between pupils. Goodlad, J.; Klein, M. (1970) distinguishes situations where there are seen observable differences among pupils: not all the pupils of the same age have study skills; pace of learning differs from their peers; the understanding level of the studies subjects is different, some pupils having the ability to deepen them, others being limited to a superficial analysis; the learning ability and the performance of each pupil are not the same at different educational objects.

Referring to these observable differences between pupils, we find the following typology of pupils in the pedagogical literature, evidenced by I. Radu (2000): pupils with low learning capacity, towards whom is sufficient the individual treatment; pupils with a more pronounced deficit in learning ability towards whom is recommended the groups organizing, asking them themes differentiated as volume, complexity, variety for the independent work.

In the absence of a differentiating of the learning, schools become elitist or selective, undemocratic, encouraging social differences between pupils. (Minder, 2011, p. 301).

The effectiveness of the learning situations by reference to the structural profile of each pupil is determined by his motivation. Neacsu I. specifies rules, norms of the motivational system: setting a clear purpose, priority and its delimitation in a precise way in the structure of the undertaken actions; fixing some goals closer in the beginning, then of more distant ones; *individualizing* of fixing the goals based on each pupil's personality; the assessment of pupils' progress positively, disapproval being less efficient in stimulating the personal motivation; competition use will be made on an incentive cooperation fund; the knowledge of the progress made by pupils in achieving the learning goals.

We appreciate the structure of the motivational rules that must be fulfilled to achieve effective learning, established by I. Neacsu (1990), because, without a permanent motivation of the pupils, we have not as response from their part an active participation in organized learning situations.

It is important that pupils know the purpose of the learning situation, to know what to learn. Also, to be efficient, the objectives of the learning situation should be organized from simple to complex, because achieving a simple task motivates the pupil, causing him to think positively, having more

confidence in his own capabilities when involved in achieving the tasks corresponding to more complex targets.

We believe that adapting the objectives of the learning situation tasks to the sintality of the classroom and to every pupil is a prerequisite for motivating pupils to support the effective learning. Also, learning tasks, which go beyond the knowledge of the pupils, are not accessible to the pupil's age determines a pressure on inhibiting him. Learning situations should be reported to the age peculiarities of pupils, but also to individual peculiarities.

For an effective motivation of the pupils involved in the learning situation is unavoidable, according to Neacsu, I, the compliance of the following objectives:
- underlining the forms of independent work and the individualization of the activities;
- differentiating the themes according to their difficulty;
- Highlighting some immediate controllable goals for moving the center of gravity from the pressure of the summative assessment to the synthesizing one;
- Pupil's engagement in more complex tasks.

An important role is teaching strategy used for effective learning situation, favoring the work of individualization of training pupils as revealed by the differentiation of the work themes and of each pupil's participation in the activity.

Cerghit (1980) specifies that the diversity of learning situations stimulates pupil's personality, its complexity, involving a wide methodical variety in reaching the goals of the learning situation for each pupil.

Thus, the learning situation operates with a wide register of methods, procedures and tools of teaching – learning for pupils' enriching, differentiation and customization.

One learning situation can not be approached in the same manner it was efficient in a particular context. Learning situation's organizing is caused by psychological factors, human factors involved in its solving, by external conditions. The factors have a decisive influence in choosing the strategies involved in the learning situation.

The learning situation is achieved through concrete techniques of action. The variety of the action techniques presents knowledge of the inclinations and individual skills of pupils, which increases the efficiency of training.

Designing of a learning task, within a created situation, is related to a single objective, for which achievement there are selected the action techniques, being required by the individual particularities of the pupils.

One learning situation created to complete the proposed operational objective is organized using differentiated work techniques for pupil's training.

This approach involves individualized treating of the learning situation by different working tasks, required by the intellectual level of development, the knowledge level attained by each pupil, his psychological profile characterized by the states of empathy, the connections established between the operations of thought for learning's efficacy.

Studying this issue of pupil's treating with reference to the structural profile, Cucos (1996) considers that "The moving of the paideia act to the spiritual potentialities of the human being, rediscovering of the spirituality and its valences, the enhancement of personal autonomy, of the involvement in reality and itself doing, all these can prevent the claims of a total education" (Cucos, 2005 p.76).

In his view, *total education* is the one where learning indoctrinates the pupil and pupil is *encased* within a single ideology and *true education* aims to train young people to go beyond it, meaning to educate themselves.

Learning individualization, says Louis Legrand, ensures for all pupils a progress in learning the basic knowledge, adapts learning process to pupils' characteristics, aiming to differentiate the individual differences between pupils that determine different levels of learning.

We admit, in favor of group level learning situations, that their effectiveness, by reference to the structural profile of the pupil, is subject to the following criteria:
- Level groups to be mobile;
- In low level groups each pupil to be carefully observed by the teacher;
- Assessment of progress and periodical regrouping of pupils by the level of achievement of the objectives of the particular situation;
- Stimulation of the communication between pupils in "trong" groups;

- favoring full support offered by the teacher to each pupil in "weak" groups. The efficiency of the learning situation is determined by internal and external factors influence.

1.3.The interaction of the internal and external factors

Training situation is actually a symbiosis of internal and external factors. The core of learning situation consists of internal factors. The interaction between the internal and external factors is objectified in subject's action to modify the initial conditions by addressing a favorable strategy.

The teacher, through predictive judgments, determines the level at which changes occur by external factors. Thus, the professor causes changes in pupils' personality, being himself the main external factor of the learning situation.

The differentiated perception of the situating conditions requires selecting and structuring of the determinants according to the psychological specific of the subject. Thus, Stefan (1988) proposes the following internal factors: capacities of generalization and discrimination, perceptive faculty, sensorial acuity, development level of language, creative ability, practical – educational spirit, sociability, sense of responsibility, perseverance, independence, self-confidence abilities level, level of aspirations, hopes and fears, certainties and misunderstandings, successes satisfaction and bitterness of failures, self-education and self-assessment capabilities.

The professor, by reference to the proposed objectives, determines those skills, attitudes and habits that will be required by the learning situation and offer predictions about pupils' possibilities to achieve them.
By the approached teaching strategy, teacher selects and integrates into the situation the external significant factors for the pupils.
After L. D' Hainaut (1981), the external factors of a learning situation that will be differentiate capitalized by structural profile of the pupils and stated objectives are: decision, individuals, learning resources, time, founds, place, spaces.
The inter-individual differences call for learning activity individualizing by observing the process by which each individual recreates for himself that purchase.
By the interaction of the internal and external factors, the individualized treatment occurs simultaneously with self-organizing.
What we consider essential is that there is no structure of the learning situation. Therefore, various methods need to be addressed, individualized

learning situations, differentiated, for the internal and external factors to interfere, resulting in effective learning situations.

The objectives of the research project have been focused on:
1. Analysis of pupil achievement as a result of organizing of individual learning situations.
2. Analysis of pupil achievement as a result of the organizing of individual learning situation, adapted to their training interests.
3. Comparative study of the pupils' progress of the two experimental groups as a result of participation in the two organizing forms of learning: individual and individualized.

We have formulated as general hypothesis:

If teachers organize individualized learning situations and adapt the entire strategic complex to the needs of each pupil, the pupils will achieve better results in school than in the case of individual learning organizing.
From this general hypothesis derives the following specific assumptions:
1. If we study the efficiency of individual learning by conducting an experiment, then teachers will identify the limits this organizing form and its effects on lowering school performance of pupils.
2. If we study the effectiveness of individualized learning, by conducting an experiment based on harmonizing different strategies in order to cover the needs of pupils' training, then teachers will identify the advantages of this organizing form and its positive effects on pupils' school achievements.

2.The Methodology
2.1.The sample

The batch of our experimental research is represented by a number of 2 teachers, primary school teachers, and 25 pupils of class II and 27 from another class, of the same level of education. Both classes are part of the same institution and include pupils who have the same educational environment conditions.

2.2.Methods

The basic method of our research project was the experiment. We performed a comparative analysis of school results obtained by the pupils of the two classes in the initial test and in the final assessment test, applied following the implementation of the experiment. Pupils' testing and comparing the results obtained by the two batches - both as compared, but also within the

same group -, was our intention to prove the positive impact of individualized learning situation organizing, adapted to the needs of training of each pupil.

For processing data on research sample we chose version 21 IBM SPSS program. We applied the Paired-Samples T Test for the sample of the two classes, setting the standard error of the average and the standard deviation. We also achieved with relative frequency polygon with graphics on clusters, studying two variables by comparing.

2.3.Instruments

Our study included a control group for which individual learning situations have been organized, and an experimental group for which have been organized individual learning situations adapted to the training needs of each pupil. Both groups were selected from the Secondary School "Traian" Craiova.

The two groups in the research batch were initially tested through a joint assessment sample, then the experiment has been conducted, and finally, to be able to compare the obtained results, we proposed identical assessment tests.

3.Results and interpretations

3.1.The experimentation of the efficiency of the differentiated - individualized learning situations

We conducted a review of learning situations organizing for the two groups of pupils in the sample, and in the end, we evaluated the level achieved by pupils in the fulfillment of the mentioned objective, through a final assessment, thus analyzing pupils' products.

We compared the two types of learning situation organizing: frontal and individual (group I) and differentiated-individualized (group II), having as operational objective: *composing a short text with the help of the supporting words*.

Performing an analysis of the individual organizing of the learning situations, we found that in the first group the learning activity of pupils was directed asking them to form sentences with the given expressions, written on the blackboard, and pupils have copied them in their books. After writing the sentences, the teacher asked pupils to read them, then each pupil to

achieve, through self-employment, the logical arrangement of sentences following the actions involved. He conducted frontal pupils' thinking, through leading questions, asking them to carry the text. Once they have composed the text, the teacher asked a pupil to write it on the blackboard.

We find that by this way of organizing and streamlining the tasks of learning the emphasis is on teacher's teaching activity, pupils are those who learn from the given model how to compose a short text. Thus, pupils' thinking is not enabled, but each formulates answers in relation to the previous reached level, then generalization occurs, through the frontal activity where knowledge is checked and secured. We also noticed that not all pupils are trained, not all express their views, but some of them are copying from the blackboard without understanding.

Unlike the learning tasks developed in individual organizing, for the second group of pupils the differentiated-individualized organizing was applied, being asked to compose a text using the given words. Thus, we focused on the selection and design of the learning situations from simple to complex, addressing differential treatment to motivate pupils and engage them in the process of formation.

Dividing pupils into groups and the rational dosing of the learning tasks are not performed by standards of the general impression on the group of pupils, but by reference to the knowledge of the initial level of pupils achieved in the achievement of an objective. To test the initial level, there is organized a frontal learning situation, where pupils are asked to orally form sentences with the help of the words. Thus, based on verification, pupils' examination by diagnosis, the teacher noted which of the pupils knew to orally form sentences using the given words, which needed support and who were doing very hard. Referring pupils to aimed objective: *to compose short sentences with certain words* follows three levels of development. Each pupil received differentiated learning tasks, according to the identified level of competence.

In order to approach in a differentiated-individualized manner the created learning situations, the teacher has studied the psychological profile of each pupil from the group of those who know to construct orally sentences using the given words, testing them the initial level in understanding of the expressions that calls to make certain semantic links. Thus, adapting the situational context to each pupil determines learning individualizing, unlike the homogeneous groups, the level, where the training strategies are the same for the same level pupils. The initial assessment of the capacities of understanding of the language is orally made, when there are written

sentences using the given words. Thus, in order to verify the understanding of the meaning of the words, the teacher has created practical situations, either on PowerPoint exposure or images.

After outlining an impression about the level achieved by each pupil in the composition of sentences, the teacher asked pupils to solve some individualized learning tasks:
- Those who can not form sentences with these words, he asked to compose by direct operating with the illustrative images of the objects;
- To the pupils who make up sentences with support, he asked to set up some sentences after the given images, represented in individual files. If some pupils have asked for help, he explained them and gave them another file with the same learning task, but with other words with illustrated meaning;
- The pupils who orally composed the solution of some problems after images have been given individualized learning tasks;
- To the pupils who faced difficulties in defining the relationship between the meaning of a word and its image, he gave them as learning task to form sentences after illustrative pictures for the meaning of the word;
- For pupils who easily make up sentences using the given words and understand their meaning, he gave them as learning task to form more expressive sentences.

In this case, we noticed that there is done a differentiated-individualized treatment. To those who heavier make up sentences by operating with objects, requiring aid, he gave them as learning task to form sentences operating with objects. In order to form this skill, teacher split only these pupils into groups, asking to each group to form a sentence using the given objects.

We believe that the work- group encourages pupils to communicate, to express their opinions, to analyze, to investigate, to operate with objects. Communicating they learn one from each other.

To those easily creating sentences, by operating with different objects he asked to set up a proposition by image. The teacher illustrated formative learning tasks, aiming to develop the intellectual capacities and skills by operating with objects, by analyzing the visual support, through logical, creative thinking.

In this way, pupils who have not formed the ability to compose sentences after images have been trained to solve learning tasks focused on

manipulation with objects, on pupil's action to investigate, to analyze, to form itself representations by the intuition of the given stimulus.

Learning tasks have become increasingly more complex, from those who have achieved very little the stated objective, to those who have appropriately attained the referred finality. Progress was reached in relation to the achieved level, from simple training to operation, analysis, synthesis, creating, creative thinking development, flexibility of thinking, divergent thinking, creative imagination.

It is important to assess the level reached by pupils in achieving the proposed object, in order to comparatively analyze the formative effectiveness of the organizing strategy, as feedback of the frontal learning situations approach, or differentiated - individualized in order to achieve the objective of composing a short text using the given words.

The assessment test was the same for both groups of pupils, requesting their ability to draft a text.

The assessment sheet included the following topics:
- Making a sentence after image;
- Filling in a lacunose sentence, by replacing the omitted word;
- Making of some sentences with given words;
- Logical arrangement of these sentences;
- Drafting a text.

Analyzing the results obtained by pupils, we found that the ones in the first group, where individual learning situations have been organized, have succeeded the following results: VW - 28%; W - 52%, S - 20%, and pupils in the second group have recorded the following results, following the differentiated – individualized organizing of the learning situations: VW - 92%; W - 8%.

We see a large percentage difference between pupils who obtained the VW mark in the two groups. We appreciate that those in the second group have achieved better results due to the organizing way of individualized learning situations, establishing the level achieved by each pupil in training, after the intermediary reached behavior. Another factor was members regrouping in relation to the individual achievements.

Also, the teacher encouraged the communication within some groups through which shy and emotional pupils can effectively collaborate with

their colleagues and can share their views which will be analyzed within the group and those who have lacks can learn from the other pupils.

In the control group was made an individual organizing, focusing on the work of the teacher and the class, viewed as a whole. Not all pupils have fulfilled the proposed objectives, as the learning activity has not been focused on building operating capacities of the pupils.

Individually organizing the learning situation, the explanation and the assessment of knowledge can not be adapted to each pupil's capabilities, but only to the faster pupils. There can not be noticed what he thinks, how is thinking a pupil having a slower solving rhythm, if all pupils have understood, what each pupil did not understand, to what point he can not make connections between old and new knowledge. By the predominance of an individual organizing, the lesson is not forming, but informs pupils not training them efficiently.

This explains the percentage differences between pupils of the two groups (see Figure 1).
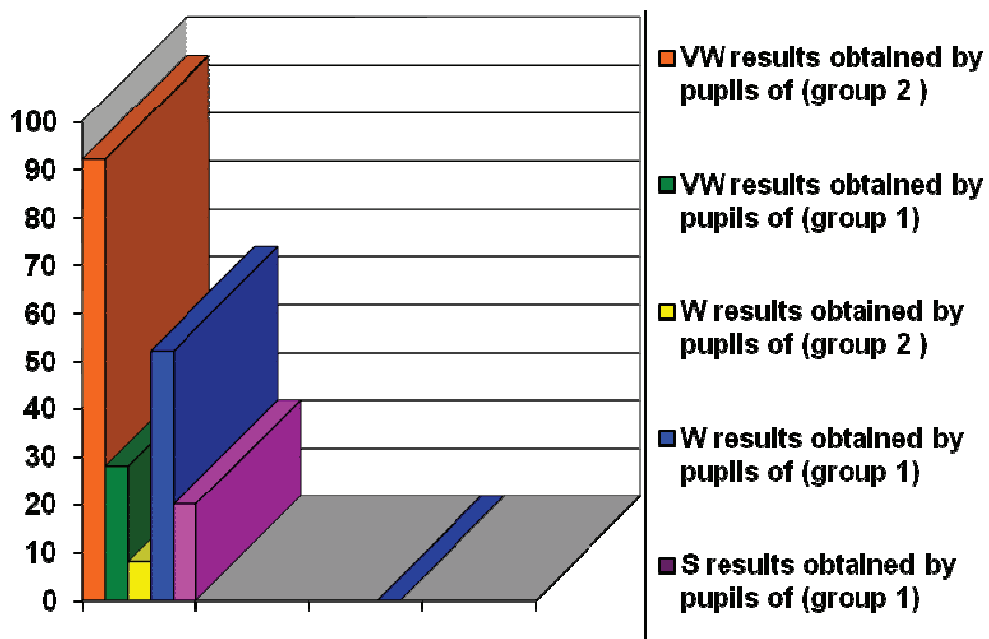

Figure 1. *The results of pupils of the two groups in summative assessment – as a finding of the efficiency of learning situations organizing*

4. Conclusions

We conclude that a validation of all assumptions about the formative efficiency of organizing the individualized learning situations, involves a longitudinal research, allowing successive reassessments of the same subjects.

This paper brings a clear contribution by presenting an experiment, a comparative analysis of different types of organizing the learning situation, as well as efficiency experimenting of organizing the individualized and differentiated learning situations.

Through the undertaken research study we have demonstrated the effectiveness of the individualized learning situations, as a result of the identification of the training needs of each pupil.

We may note the following aspects as a conclusion of the undertaken research.
This study presents the following personal contributions:
- The scientific reasoning of the differentiated - individualized organizing forms to the detriment of the frontal one and of independent work.
- Bringing into question of a less studied term in the literature of specialty, of adapting of the situational context to the individual training needs of each pupil; highlighting the impact of the differentiated - individualized organizing form on the school progress of pupils.

As open issues for future studies, we propose the extending of the batch of research, targeting multiple educational backgrounds, as well as of the different levels of professional training of teachers.

We present as limits of the research:

The small number of respondents teachers and pupils, given the fact that our research was situated at the level of an experimental project; using a small number of qualitative research methods and tools that can not allow detailed, relevant generalizations.

In a synthetic approach, we emphasize the need to restructure the adaptation of the instructional strategies to be based on the pupil's role viewed as individuality, as a personality with different needs for training and development.

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