A cognitive approach applied to teaching

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Abstract

This article reports the results of educational strategies and methods based on Feuerstein’s Instrumental Enrichment Programme (FIE) in some schools and consultation centres of the Czech Republic. Beginning with the year 2000, when the first workshop in FIE was realized, about 780 psychologists, teachers, special educators and parents were educated in Reuven Feuerstein’s methodology through the ATC (Accredited Training Centre). It is very difficult to say, how many children and adults really benefitted from FIE intervention. The alumni are mostly responsible for a group of children, a class, or at least for a family. Almost each of them becomes an opinion leader in education, so that the number of children who benefit from FIE is about ten times higher than the number of participants. It rises slowly, but continually.

The presented contribution is a collection of case studies, using a qualitative research method.

The first part of the article compares the present work of a teacher in a small school, who applies the concept of Prof. Feuerstein, with the previous way of teaching. The second deals with pupils’ self-evaluation in individual subjects (math, mother tongue etc.), the third discusses the application of FIE in

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teaching children with intellectual disability, the fourth is devoted to the use of tables and paradigms in teaching mother tongue and other languages in the seventh grade, the fifth on the application of FIE in teaching physics and the last part (6) on the lesson planning based on the FIE course. Altogether six teachers and 99 pupils were involved.

**Keywords**

Reuven Feuerstein, Instrumental Enrichment, pupils’ self-evaluation, children with intellectual disability, Mediated Learning Experience (MLE), educational planning.

## Introduction

The team of the Educational and Psychological Counselling Centre (PPP) in Náchod, a town in the north of the Czech Republic, employed the Feuerstein’s method of Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) when working with underperforming pupils in their district. The teachers of these children were later astonished at how much the children had changed. As a result, they wanted to learn more about the method that had helped their pupils. For this reason, the Counselling Centre decided to apply for two EU funding grants due to which two FIE courses for 80 teachers could be organised. Over the period of two years the teachers were attending a series of seminars (once a month) in the Consulting Centre which psychologists and special education teachers analysed, supervised and coached their work. All participants were asked to bring their lesson plans which were assessed by the other teachers and two supervisors. In this way the participants were learning from one another.

This paper describes how individual teachers changed their teaching style, not only in preparing their lesson plans, but also in the process of teaching in the class itself. The other part informs about a successful experiment concerning the self-evaluation of children in different subjects finally gives an account of the approach of a form teacher who involves all her pupils in lesson planning over the whole school year so that they can take more responsibility for what they do.

It follows from the contributions that all the teachers implement individual categories of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) when interacting with their pupils. Intentionality and reciprocity are clearly demonstrated in the