

## **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT**

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### **A LOOK BACK AT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA: TEN YEARS AFTER**

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During the subsequent ten years in Serbia, there has been considerable activity to move policy and practice in a more inclusive direction. In this paper, I use evidence from multiple research studies carried out in recent years in order to consider what has been done and what needs to be done to move the education system in an inclusive direction. In an attempt to define inclusive education, I will rely on Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) idea that 'inclusion is focused on presence, participation and achievement'.

'Presence' is concerned with where children are educated. Data suggest that there has been a steady reduction in the numbers of pupils attending special schools, and an increase in the number of pupils from vulnerable groups (VG) in mainstream education (UNICEF, 2020). Barriers to the presence of VG children in mainstream education manifest itself in different ways: underrepresentation in both compulsory and non-compulsory education, overrepresentation in self-contained classrooms and rare transfers from special to mainstream education. It is not enough to ensure access, but it has to be access to high-quality experiences and support. Although findings related to the quality of inclusive education are inconclusive, they suggest a discrepancy in the assessment of certain aspects of (pre)school education between vulnerable groups and mainstream population (e.g. parental involvement, antidiscrimination culture).

Moreover, inclusive education should have in focus 'achievements' of all children. Research on academic outcomes of VG children in Serbia is scarce. However, the study conducted on a population of eight graders strongly support the view that inclusion of VG students in regular classes does not have a negative impact on the achievements of their peers (Jovanović et al, 2017). The same study suggests that positive learning outcomes for all children are not a consequence of a well-developed system of support, but of concurrent engagement of competent and motivated individuals. Wellbeing is also considered to be a particularly important indicator of the quality of inclusive education. Evaluative studies of inclusiveness on both preschool (OSF, 2020) and primary education level (Kovač Cerović et al, 2016) indicate that (pre)school staff, parents and children agree on high levels of children wellbeing. However, compared to their peers, VG children show significantly lower levels of wellbeing and peer acceptance. Efforts used to bring large-scale change in the past decade were predominantly low leverage (e.g. policy documents, conferences, in-service courses). Whilst such initiatives may make a contribution, by and large, they do not lead to significant changes in thinking and practice (Senge, 1989). Ten years after the

introduction of inclusive education, equity issues are still persistent, therefore we should ask ourselves have we been transforming the educational system towards inclusion, or we have just renamed it.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, monitoring and evaluation, education system change

## **EVERYONE MUST DO AS LEADER SAYS – UNDERSTANDING COOPERATION WITH TEN-YEARS-OLDS**

Smiljana Jošić

Today, collaborative problem solving is often seen as one of the crucial competencies in successful coping with everyday life. True collaborative work means the continuous shared commitment of two or more speakers to achieve certain goals together, to solve a problem or to construct some new knowledge in the process. Of many years standing researches and projects, like Thinking Together, showed that children of age 6 – 14 need an introduction of basic rules before they engage in any shared activity. The question that remains open is whether these rules of collaboration are effective in different contexts and how the students understand them. The aim of this research was focused on how children understand basic rules of collaboration where suitable usage of language was crucial in solving the problems together. Ten pairs of 10 years old solved 16 tasks which were set on establishing different rules of collaboration. Sentences were presented in positive and negative connotations and the task was directed on detecting the good and the bad rules of collaboration. Children could construct a new rule of collaboration if it was not previously offered. All of the dialogues were transcribed and analyzed by conversation analysis which was focused on spontaneous verbal production within the process of solving both good and bad rules of collaboration, and on the children's first reactions. The results showed that the most of the sentences in all the dyads were successfully marked and that children were able to successfully detect the rules which encouraged the collaboration, but also those that interfered with working together. Still, there were situations where the tasks were successfully solved but the children were not able to offer precise explanations of the meaning of the rule. As the most challenging, stands out the sentence „we must do as the leader says“. It is negatively formulated rule which implies the separated responsibility of decision making and most of the errors were made in that case. In certain situations, children constructed the new rules of collaboration, which was allowed by the procedure, but the results were usually reformulated, previously existing rules of collaboration. The results are going to be interpreted within the socio-cultural paradigm. We will try to understand and present the significance of collaborations which emerged spontaneously, provoked by the deliberating the rules of collaboration.

**Keywords:** cooperation, conversational analyses, meanings, ten-year-olds

## **STORM AND WELLBEING OF THE ADOLESCENCE IN SERBIA**

Marina Videnović

For a long time, adolescence has been considered a period of storm and stress filled with crises and risky behaviours provoked by biological maturation. Empirical studies revealed that storm and stress are not inevitable for all adolescents or even for the majority of them. Adolescents' positive development and wellbeing emerged as new research fields that attract a lot of attention. The aim of this study is to analyse empirical results related to the major issues of Serbian adolescents and to mark open questions and further research direction. A lot of studies showed that culture shapes the development of adolescents and the differences between adolescents from different countries or between adolescents at different historical points should be expected. Ten years of research of the adolescents' everyday life doesn't reveal empirical evidence for the storm and stress paradigm. Most of the adolescents have a good relationship with their parents and do not report being depressed or feeling lonely. Binge drinking is the most prominent risky behaviour. About every third adolescent experienced drunkenness over a one month period which is a relatively high per cent but not higher than in other European countries. Several studies that used the EPOCH scale as an instrument for measuring wellbeing showed relatively high scores of adolescents from Serbia and did not reveal many differences from the European countries. Also, PISA 2018 study indicated that the overall life satisfaction of the fifteen-year-olds from Serbia is higher than the OECD average. The question arises should those results indicate that concerns about young people in Serbia are unjustified or we should look deeper to identify challenges of today's adolescents. One of the domains in which problems are easily identified is education. Every third adolescent from vocational school hasn't got any teacher that cares about her or him and almost 80% of them do not reach basic literacy level at PISA study. Also, the quality of leisure time (usually spent in passive activities that do not require mental and emotional engagement) could be considered as the big issue of Serbian adolescents that is shared with adolescents from the western countries.

**Keywords:** adolescence, wellbeing, risky behaviour, Serbia, education