



THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract

In this paper the quality of education for students with disabilities in EU countries (Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Spain) and non-EU (Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia) has been investigated and compared. In the framework of iLearn project supported by EU Commission the survey in participating in which participated students with disabilities and their parents or caretakers was realized. The data was collected with questionnaire containing 16 questions covering following topic use of computer, satisfaction with educational process, use of free time and interviews made with selected members of target group. The collected data have been statistically processed. It was found that there is significant difference in evaluation of quality of education between EU and non-EU countries. However the participants from non-EU countries gave better marks for educational process than EU members. This need more analysis and is probable caused by different culture, tradition and history.

Key Words: Quality of education, evaluation, students with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

In the iLearn projects (part of Lifelong Learning Programme) participate the partners from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. iLearn (ICT based Learning and Social Network for People with Disabilities and Volunteers) is a project co-financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme with the aim to foster social inclusion, lifelong learning and voluntary work. iLearn wants to offer a fruitful opportunity to learn, share experience and connect to each other to people with disabilities, parents or caretakers, volunteers and local authorities. The course of cooking was developed with the aim to facilitate social inclusion of people with disabilities using accessible ICT tools both for learning and networking parents and caretakers and to provide them with fruitful occasion to learn from different countries and practices. As a part of activities which were realized in the framework of iLearn project there was a user analysis in which several interesting elements important for life of people with disabilities have been collected, processed and analyzed. A significant part of data was connected with the quality of education of people with disabilities. To get more insight in the problem of education we made further statistical analysis of collected data with aim to find out if there is significant difference between quality of education in EU countries and non-EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina).



THE SURVEY

Preparing user analysis for iLearn project we collected a lot of data covering different area important for people with disabilities. One area was the quality of education for people with disabilities. As the source of data we used the questionnaires filled by children with intellectual and combined disabilities, both genders under 20 years. The questionnaires contained 16 questions of mixed type covering following topics what are they interesting for, how they use free time and how they are satisfied with the educational system and how much they use computers. For investigation how are person with disabilities satisfy with educational system we asked how they mark the teachers, educational programme and educational materials. The questions were of closed type and suggested answers were in Lickert scale with the marks from 1-5 (1 – lowest mark and 5 highest mark).

In the survey there were questioned 53 persons – pupils and students with disabilities coming from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. The participants have been divided in two groups 28 persons were from EU countries and 25 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (12 from BiH and 13 from Croatia).

The answers collected from both groups were processed and analyzed using statistical methods (Fazlović, 2006).

RESULTS

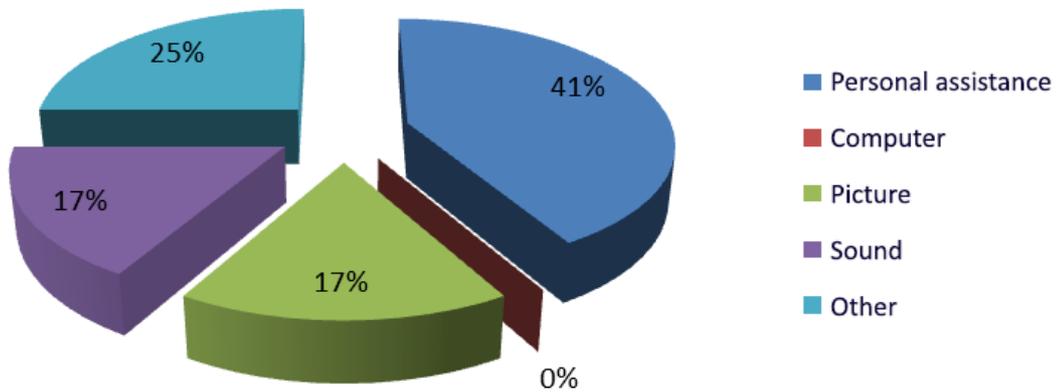
The participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia gave better marks for education of people with disabilities then participants from EU countries. Because this result was not expected we used t-test for comparison the answers from both groups and we got as follows between t is necessary to adopt some basic concepts of cooking for people with disabilities namely:

- There was statistically significant difference for quality of teachers between EU and non-EU countries for the 99% level of confidence the t-value was 2.83 what is larger from table value 2.02
- There was statistically significant difference for quality of educational programme between EU and non-EU countries at 95% level of confidence because the t value was 2.34 and table value is 1.675
- There was statistically significant difference for quality of educational programme between EU and non-EU countries at 95% level of confidence because the t value was 3.35 and table value is 1.675

The results were unexpected so we were trying to explain why it happened that persons from non-EU countries gave better marks for all three elements of educational system for people with disabilities. Our conclusion was that Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are countries where the educational system is authoritative (Modrić-Blivajs, 2007) so pupils and students are a little bit afraid to be critical and that students with special needs are usually going to special schools where they have better conditions.

Another interesting results of survey were the answers to question What makes learning easier? On fig 1 are results for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

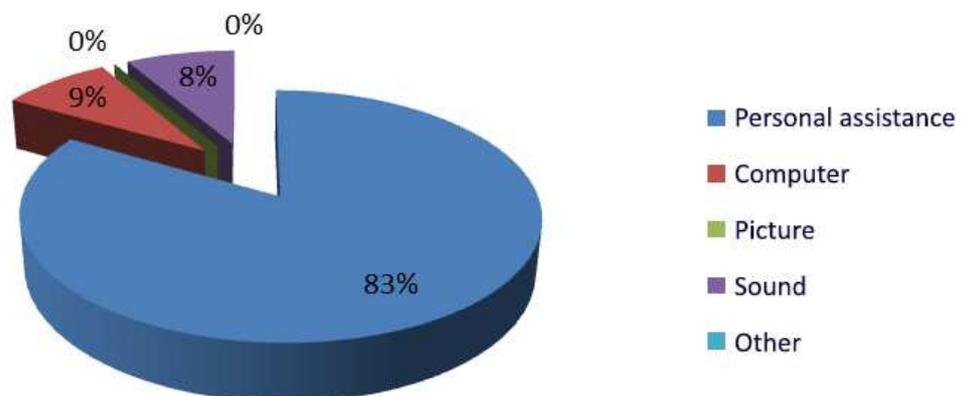
What makes learning easier?



Figur 1: Answers from Bosnia and Herzegovina

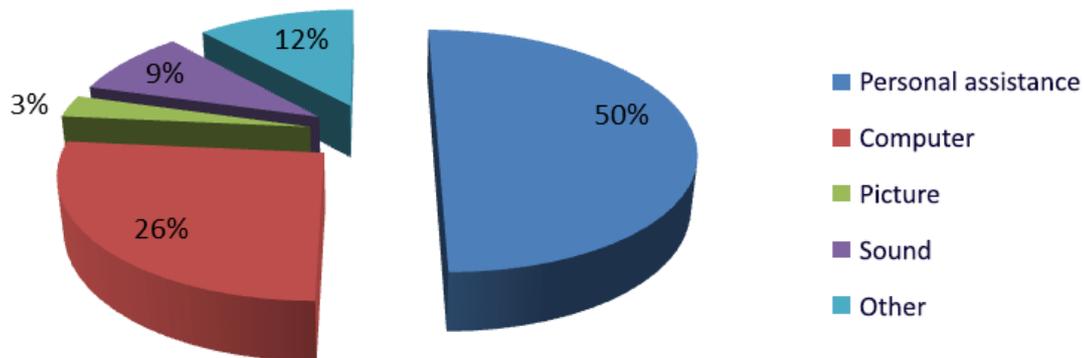
The answers from Bosnia and Herzegovina are different from answers from Croatia (Fig. 2) and EU countries (Fig. 3).

What makes learning easier?



Figur 2: Answers from Croatia

What makes learning easier?



Figur 3: Answers from EU countries

Although in all countries the most important support for learning are coming from teachers there is a big difference between use of computer in learning support. It is high in EU countries 26% , less in Croatia 9% and almost 0% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It could be explained by the difference in the economic situation in those countries however it has to be a subject of more detailed analysis.

CONCLUSION

The comparison of educational system for people with disabilities in EU countries (Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) and non EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) shows that in accordance the answers of participants there is significant difference between these two systems. At same time the level of use of computers as learning tool is much larger in EU countries. These differences are explained as difference in culture (non EU countries are more authoritative) and in economic situation in these countries. However to get more reliable results it is necessary to make more detailed survey (additional questions and larger sample of person with disabilities who will fill the questionnaires).

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