

A DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with a teaching scenario that exploits contemporary teaching views of the course of Religion studies as well as modern learning theories, such as the approach of constructivism and socio-cultural approaches. The aim is the differentiated teaching of students in Secondary Education, including pupils with Learning Difficulties. In particular, reference is made to the difficulties of reading comprehension experienced by several students with Learning Difficulties and their causes. Finally, f specific proposals follow for a differentiated and effective didactic intervention.

Keywords: Differentiation, Learning Difficulties, Reading Comprehension, Interactive board, Religion studies.

INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in the general school means the end of children's separate education. The basic principle is that separate education is an outdated practice that is incompatible with a modern and civilized society and is not enough to be enacted by law, but presupposes the voluntary support of school teachers, as well as parents, who will play a special role in identifying the necessity of an integrated education (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Teachers, as an integral part of the process of reforming and re-educating education, should be able to mobilize students in the learning process by providing diversified methods of knowledge acquisition to promote all pupils, regardless of their physical, mental and mental state (Soul, 2002). Therefore, the goal of integrated education is to adapt class and teaching so that all students can be accommodated regardless of their differences in communication, learning, movement and behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A fairly frequent example of pupils with special educational needs is pupils with Learning Difficulties (LD). The LD represent the largest class of special educational needs and is a matter of many students, parents, educators and researchers. They are not only an issue only of primary school pupils, but students often face them both in secondary education and in their adult lives. It is estimated that up to 20% of the student population has special learning needs during a period of schooling (DES, 1978).

Students with LD often face difficulties in reading, decoding and understanding. Special reading difficulties are often referred to as dyslexia. Dyslexia is a native special language difficulty that occurs particularly in word decoding and in understanding the written discourse. In the case of writing difficulties, these can be manifested by problems of spelling and/ or production of the written speech.

Reading comprehension is, however, considered to be an important parameter of a successful learning process, as through that process we achieve learning. However, it is widely known that it is a complex process, which depends on the basic and top-level skills that the person who attempts to read must have (McNamara, 2007). More specifically, the understanding of a written text is an important prerequisite for the reading decoding ability achieved through phonological awareness and the enrichment of the perceptual vocabulary (Hirsch, 2003). At the same time, however, the ability to activate pre-existing knowledge, the memory, the ability to draw conclusions, and the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is necessary. In addition, it is necessary to mobilize the interest of the student with the development of personal motivation.

As portrayed in international experience (Higgins et al., 2007), the interaction between ICT, and in particular interactive boards, is a key factor in maintaining interest and contributing to learning outcomes. The interaction has two dimensions. The first is about student interaction. The large interactive screen is made visible to everyone and encourages a high level of interaction with students. The teacher and a student can write something on the interactive board and the other students can observe. What keeps student interest on the interaction board (Cunningham, 2003) is the visual stimulus.

The visualization of the curriculum through the use of attractive images in the learning process attracts the interest and attention of even children with LS and can be used creatively in order to increase their interest and facilitate reading comprehension. They help the student to interact with verbal and virtual representations while presenting verbal and visual information at a time and space level (Mayer & Moreno, 2003).

The basic theory of Piaget's Personal Constructivism, where knowledge is actively built by the learner rather than passively engaged in the environment follows the theories of learning supported by the interactive board in the classroom. It also follows the principle of Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), where knowledge is considered to be the result of interactions of individuals with their environment. This socio-cultural approach is linked to the use of the interactive board as pupils have the opportunity to co-operate in front of its screen as well as to solve problems that have been solved.

Kennewell and Higgins (2007) argue that interactive boards make learning more pleasant and interesting for both teachers and students by using multiple and varied learning tools such as multimodal texts that combine text, graphs, audio and video, and present each learning resource in a particularly attractive way. This has the effect of enhancing student participation and motivation for participation.

The results of this teaching intervention as well as the difficulties that will arise will be presented and analyzed thoroughly after the application and statistical analysis of its results.

METHODOLOGY

Teaching scenario

Course

This scenario concerns the course of the Religion studies at the first grade of high school and in particular it can be included in the unit titled "Entrance and integration into the church: the mysteries of Baptism and anointing".

The special theme is the study of the mysteries of baptism and anointing and is perfectly compatible with the current School Curriculum, since its central axis is:

1. To discover the mystery of the baptism.
2. To familiarize themselves with the vocabulary associated with it.
3. To present and interpret all the symbols that exist in the mystery.
4. To understand the reason this mystery exists and takes place.
5. To relate the mystery to the life of man and his effect on his communication with God and other people.

Teaching goals

The short-term teaching objectives of the scenario are:

A. As far as the course is concerned:

1. To learn about the foundation, history, and theology of the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation.
2. To teach deeper aspects of the individual parts of Baptism.

The long-term goal of the scenario is:

To assess the gift of their own Baptism and realize the peculiarity of their Christian existence based on their Baptism and their Chrismation.

B. With regard to the use of new technologies:

1. To familiarize themselves with the use of the PC keyboard

C. As to the Learning Process:

1. To collaborate with children in groups
2. To develop self-action
3. To strengthen their creative thinking
4. To identify new methods of problem solving

Didactic Methodology - Organization of class

The pedagogical use of ICT in the educational process supports the student-centered character of information that combines collaborative and guided discovery. The demands of the work to be done and requiring the use of the interactive table and video put students in critical reflection on the Christian mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation and their importance by associating them with their experiences.

As far as the organization of the class is concerned, it is proposed to apply this scenario for a teaching time in an interactive room.

Techniques-tools: ICT, photos, brainstorming, worksheet, interactive table.

Cognitive, Metacognitive Strategies: Observation, Dialogue, Brainstorming, Partitioning of the module in sub-sections for easier and more efficient management and processing of information, Enhancement of font for better reading decoding and comprehension, Self-evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Application of the teaching scenario

The teacher encourages students with learning difficulties to collaborate with each other so that, along with their own support, they can understand the mystery of baptism and anointing. In order to motivate students with reading comprehension difficulties and to discover their previous knowledge, they present images in the interactive board. The pictures may include a baby's baptism, baptism of an adult, baptism of Christ, a group baptism, the priest to welcome

the parents with the baby, a baptismal font, oil, a table with baby clothes, martyrs, the candle, the priest with the goddess at the stage of catechism, the dress of the baptized with the new garments, etc. She asks students to describe what they see in the image that shows them and to express their experiences and knowledge. In this way, it creates the right climate so that there is a brainstorming on the part of the students. Pupils submit their views on the mystery of baptism and anointing, dialogue between the teacher and the pupils and the appropriate learning environment for the course of the lesson. Activity Duration (5 minutes).

Then the teacher wishing to intensify the interest of the students in the lesson and to increase their active participation puts on the painting picture with the baptism of Christ as well as another with group baptism of adults and asks the students to describe the images. The expected answers of the students are: we see the baptism of Jesus; in the image are presented adults who are baptized. In this way the dialogue between teacher and pupils continues, pupils' self-confidence increases and the course progresses positively. On the occasion of the pupils' answers, the teacher makes a brief reference to the history of Baptism. Activity Duration (10 minutes).

The teacher, in accordance with the specific teaching module chosen for teaching, aims to perceive students with reading understanding difficulties three important facts: a) that our integration into the body of Christ takes place at any time in our lives, either by decision of our parents in infancy or later on our own decision as adults. b) That the Lord first set up the mystery of baptism with his own baptism and the anointing received from the Holy Spirit in the Jordan River. c) The command that he gave to his disciples, "you have learned all the nations that baptized them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Then they proceed to the acquisition of new knowledge, which is achieved with the help of technology, if the teacher wants to diversify teaching, provide specialized support to students with reading comprehension difficulties and the learning process to be presented with the most understandable and accessible way. The teacher separates the students into three groups, three to five, and after equipping the classroom with at least three PCs, each team are required to work on their computer. Each computer has stored audio-visual material in the archive with the mystery of baptism and cleavage that has divided it into three sections. In each of the three sections there is a corresponding explanation of the vocabulary. The teacher instructs group A to deal with the unity of baptism. Students watch video and blueprint videos with baptism scenes and refer to the vocabulary explanation. In group B, the teacher suggests that students deal with the catechism unity and encourage them, just as they did in group A to watch the video of the module with pictures of indoctrination. Finally, in Group C, students are encouraged to attend the section about the anointing. Once the video of each group is completed, the teacher asks students if they have any questions if they want some explanation of what they have seen and heard. If students have questions, the teacher assigns a student from each group who puts the questions to be clarified. Next, the teacher gives answers to each group and after the quizzes are completed, each worksheet is handed out with two exercises for each group. The worksheet includes an exercise with closed-ended questions. The questions and answers of each group were communicated to the classroom and discussed between the students and the teacher. Activity Duration (25 minutes).

When each group completes the activities in the worksheet, the teacher wishing to keep the student's interest in the lesson until the end of the class takes advantage of the role of technology and, more specifically, through the interactive board, proposes to the students a

new activity. They watch a video from a group Orthodox baptism. Then they invite the students for discussion by asking them questions like what they notice, if they can identify similarities or differences, if they have attended a group baptism. Activity Duration (5 minutes).

Finally, in order to evaluate the whole teaching scenario and process the students are distributed an evaluation questionnaire. Student performance criteria are directly related to the achievement of the aforementioned learning objectives and are controlled through the activities and worksheets given to the pupils.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper the application of modern teaching theories for the course of Religion studies is proposed as well as modern theories of learning, such as the approach of constructivism (learning as a process of creation of knowledge by the students themselves) and socio-cultural approaches (learning as a result of interaction and participation in social groups). In this context, the interactive board will be used. It is also proposed to evaluate the pupil's acquired knowledge using a worksheet that includes multiple choice questions to check the understanding of the text given to them to process. The advantages of this method are reliability of measurement procedures, shortness of administration (Magliano, Millis, Ozuru, & McNamara, 2007) and ease of completion. Also, as multiple choice questions can be answered within a short period of time, it is possible to add more questions that will cover a larger range of the cognitive area being assessed (Campbell, 1999).

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