

Challenges of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education

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Abstract

The article discusses the elements of the comprehensive support concept for children/students/pupils, aimed at further empowering school leaders and teachers to enhance the competencies required for working in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous learning environments. In Slovenia, we have observed an increase in the enrollment of immigrant children in public kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools during the period of 2017-2022, ranging from 0.9% to 4.46%. Furthermore, we perceive an increased need for training among kindergarten and school leaders and professionals to strengthen their competencies in working with linguistically and culturally heterogeneous learning environments. Comprehensive support include: a safe and supportive environment for acceptance and inclusion; an individualized teaching approach as support for ensuring social inclusion and academic success of children; preservation of the first language and initial language instruction; an inclusive, stimulating, and intercultural environment; collaboration with parents and the local community; a professional environment and continuous professional support for professionals. In addressing these elements, we base our approach on the thesis that education and upbringing for successful integration of immigrant children into new environments are among the most important factors contributing to equal opportunities for their successful development and societal integration. Based on these concepts, we develop a teacher training program that is implemented through collaborative efforts with practicing teachers, in partnership with local non-governmental organizations and associations. These training sessions take place at the regional level, ensuring comprehensive and diverse participation.

Keywords: concept, comprehensive support, immigrant students, teacher training, partnership