

CZU: 37.016:376.2

[https://doi.org/10.59295/sum9\(176\)2024_14](https://doi.org/10.59295/sum9(176)2024_14)

CURRICULAR ADAPTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SEN – POSSIBLE STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

*Florin CHEIA,**Moldova State University*

Curricular adaptation has as its essential point the reform of education contents, the general objective being: adaptation and active integration of children with special educational needs in life and society. An appropriate school curriculum for students with CES must emphasize, mainly, the development of personality traits in the affective, motivational, character and socialization fields, the development of individual work skills, the harmonious development of psychomotor behaviors.

The differentiated curriculum involves the methods of selecting and organizing the contents, teaching-learning methods, assessment methods and techniques, performance standards, psychological learning environment.

Considering the diversity, way and specific peculiarities of learning of all children, including those with special educational needs, we can draw the conclusion that one of the essential qualities of the new school curriculum aims at a greater degree of flexibility, so that it will allow each child to advance at his/her own pace, to be treated according to his/her learning abilities.

Keywords: *curriculum adaptation, forms of organization, project, student, CES, strategies.*

ADAPTAREA CURRICULARĂ ÎN CAZUL ELEVILOR CU CES – POSIBILE STRATEGII ȘI OBIECTIVE

Adaptarea curriculară are ca punct esențial reforma conținuturilor învățământului, obiectivul general fiind: adaptarea și integrarea activă în viață și societate a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale. Un curriculum școlar adecvat pentru elevii cu CES trebuie să pună accent, în principal, pe dezvoltarea trăsăturilor de personalitate din domeniul afectiv, motivațional, caracterial și al socializării, dezvoltarea deprinderilor de muncă individuală, dezvoltarea armonioasă a conduitelor psihomotrice.

Curriculumul diferențiat presupune modalitățile de selectare și organizare a conținuturilor, metodelor de predare-învățare, metodelor și tehnicilor de evaluare, standardelor de performanță, mediului psihologic de învățare.

Având în vedere diversitatea, modul și particularitățile specifice de învățare a tuturor copiilor, inclusiv și a celor cu cerințe educative speciale, putem trage concluzia, că una din calitățile esențiale ale noului curriculum școlar vizează un grad mai mare de flexibilitate, astfel încât va permite fiecărui copil să avanseze în ritmul său, să fie tratat în funcție de capacitățile sale de învățare.

Cuvinte-cheie: *adaptare curriculară, forme de organizare, proiect, elev, CES, strategii.*

Introduction

The adapted curriculum must be designed as a specific support for the continuous training and development of each child regardless of his/her level of development. The adaptation of curriculum content takes into account both the volume of knowledge, and especially the psychological processes and functional peculiarities of the nervous system of students with special educational needs, in which the compensatory function determines a series of changes in the neural networks of information transmission and processing.

The essential point of **curriculum adaptation** is the reform of educational content, the general objective being: the adaptation and active integration into life and society of children with special educational needs.

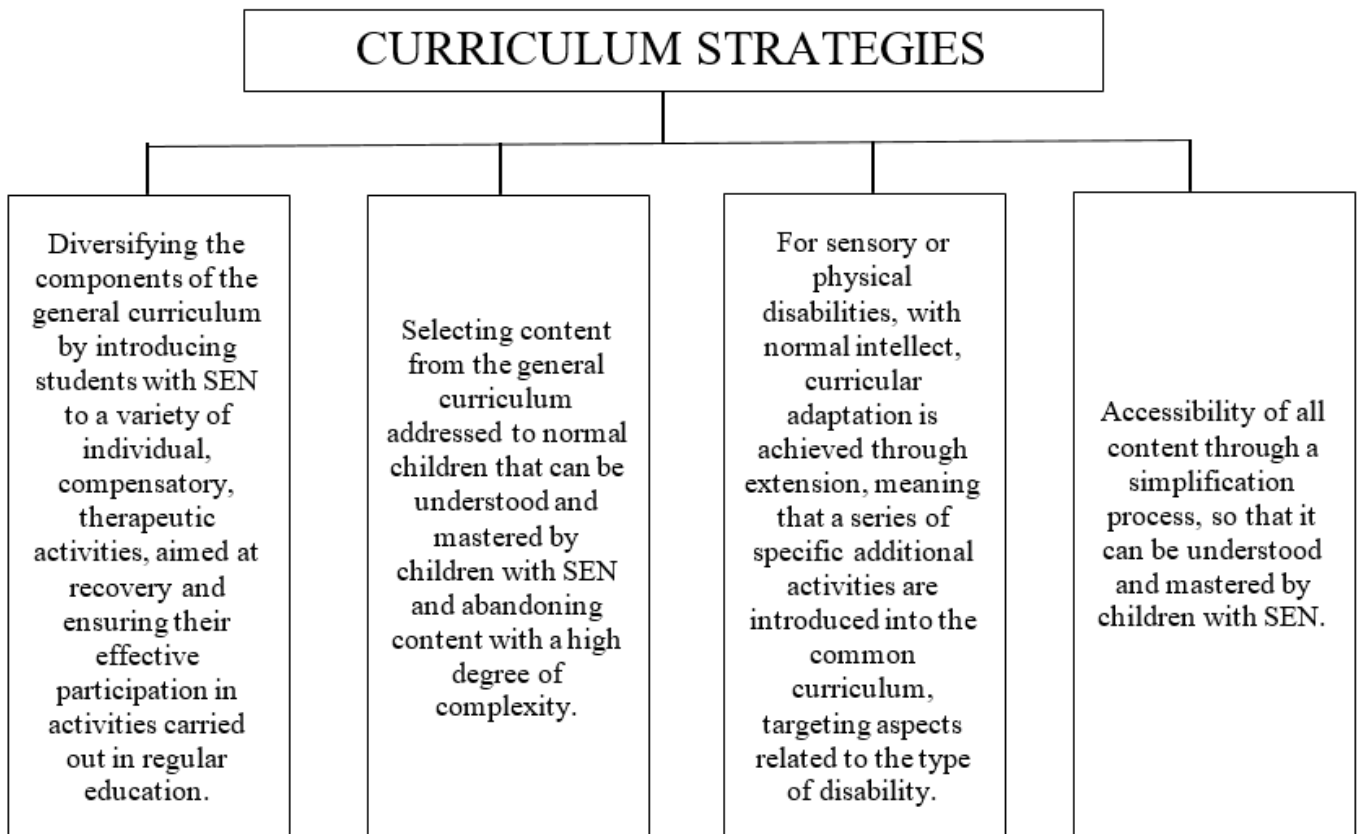
This aims at: (1) psychophysical and intellectual recovery; (2) the formation of a scientific conception of the world; (3) the development of autonomous thinking and responsibility for integration into the social environment; (4) the education of general-human and national values by educating the qualities: kindness, love of work, humanism, social responsibility, etc.

Conceptual Approaches Regarding Curriculum Adaptation

Current pedagogical literature defines curriculum adaptation as *an innovative way of designing* the curriculum, which involves synthesizing and didactically organizing the contents from different fields of knowledge, so as to ensure the acquisition by children of a coherent, unitary image of the real world. The term of *adapted curriculum*, as defined by various authors, primarily suggests the correlation of contents, but this approach requires a curricular approach in which the starting point is most often the intended purpose/purposes, according to which all other components of the instructional-formative process are chosen [3].

The main strategies that could be used to design an adapted curriculum are detailed in the figure below:

Fig. 1. Strategies for Designing Adapted Curriculum.



An appropriate school curriculum for students with SEN should focus mainly on the following areas:

1. Development of personality traits in the affective, motivational, character and socialization domains – self-image, goals, interests, passions, motivations, concordance between personal potential, achievements and the value of products produced, individual and group activities, degree of tolerance and understanding towards those around them and towards their values, affective balance, game, leisure activities, individual, school, social responsibilities, relationships with colleagues and with those around them, behavior, demeanor, attitudes, respect, support, control of aggression, attitude towards work, development of personal and social autonomy, etc.

2. Development of individual work skills – study skills and personal learning style, social learning, extracurricular learning activities, attitude towards school success/failure, thought processes, verbal and nonverbal, oral and written communication, reading, basic arithmetic operations, mode of solving tasks/problems, etc.

3. Development of moral, religious and aesthetic conduct – the system of moral values, attitude towards religious values, areas of artistic interest, attitude towards various social events and phenomena, degree of involvement in various activities with ethical or aesthetic connotation, etc.

4. Harmonious development of psychomotor conduct – basic psychomotor skills (locomotion, writing, gestures, mimics, etc.), dynamic games and physical exercises, resistance to physical effort, etc.

The organization and management of instructional-educational process must be oriented towards the application of a rich arsenal of correctional-remedial didactic activities, which will lead to an increase in the efficiency of preparing these children for life and production activities, their active integration into the current socio-human community.

Considering the diversity, manner and specific learning characteristics of all children, including those with special educational needs, we can conclude that one of the essential qualities of the new school curriculum is a greater degree of flexibility, so that it will allow each child to advance at his/her own pace, to be treated according to his/her learning abilities. This process of introducing innovations at the classroom level „requires time, personal interaction and contacts, continuous training and other forms of people-based support” [6, p. 391].

The organization and management of teaching-learning activities must be structured on concrete levels and stages of education, with strictly defined curricular areas and contents, measurable through acceptable evaluation dimensions, intended for the fair assessment of the level of development, intelligence, intellectuality, morality, humanity, spirituality of each child, including children with special educational needs.

Curriculum adaptation can be achieved through elements detailed in the table below:

Table 1. Ways to Adapt Curriculum.

No. Crt.	Ways to Adapt Curriculum	Details
1.	Extension	- introduction of additional activities that mainly target aspects related to the acquisition of specific languages (dactyleme, Braille alphabet, sign language, etc.) and communication, spatial orientation, socialization and community integration activities, practical activities focused on professional training appropriate to the type of deficiency.
2.	Contents Selection	- selection of certain contents from the general curriculum, which can be understood and acquired by children with SEN; giving up contents with a high degree of complexity.
3.	Accessibility and Diversification of General Curriculum Components	- involvement of students with SEN in a variety of individual, compensatory, therapeutic activities, aimed at their recovery, and ensuring their effective participation in the activities carried out in regular education.
4.	Adaptation of Teaching Methods and Procedures	- use of predominantly intuitive methods and procedures that help the student with SEN to understand and internalize the contents taught in class.
5.	Adaptation of Assessment Methods	- use of assessment methods that highlight the evolution and performance of students not only intellectually, but, above all, in application: the degree of valorizing the aptitude potential and the ways to solve some typical life problems or problem situations, the possibilities of relating and communicating with those around you, professional performance, etc.

The differentiated curriculum involves the methods of selecting and organizing content, teaching-learning methods, evaluation methods and techniques, performance standards, and the psychological learning environment; the goal is to differentiate learning experiences and adapt the instructional-educational process to the student's aptitude and understanding possibilities, interests and educational requirements, and learning pace and style. This differentiation takes into account, first of all, the specifics of aptitude potential, the dominant personality traits, and the ability to understand and process information/knowledge acquired by the student in the instructional-educational process. Starting from this premise, we can talk here about an individual/personalized curriculum.

Developing a flexible curriculum involves the following:

- respecting the rights of each child to instruction and education according to his/her potential and capabilities;
- training children with special educational needs in appropriate behavior, which will allow their adaptation and social integration;
- developing the necessary capacities for independent resolution (within the limits allowed by the degree of deficiency) of life problems, self-control in difficult situations, modification of methods and techniques of intellectual work that ensure efficiency, adaptation, school and social integration, the emphasis being placed on:
 - development of children's personality;
 - development of individual work skills;
 - development of moral conduct, aesthetic sense, harmonious development of motor conduct.

For students with SEN, the curriculum must have the following objectives:

- To allow students to interact and communicate with a wide variety of people.
- To allow students to express their preferences, communicate their needs, make decisions and choose those options that they are guided by or that other people respect.
- To promote the ability to advocate for their own cause or to use the diversity of support and assistance systems.
- To prepare students for adult life, ensuring the greatest possible degree of autonomy and to support them in establishing relationships of mutual respect and dependence on each other.
- To lead to an increase in students' awareness and understanding of the environment in which they live and the world around them.
- To encourage students to explore, to be curious (to research) and to seek challenges.
- To offer them a wide range of learning experiences at each of the school stages, according to their age.

Therefore, by adapting/improving the school curriculum to the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, we will be able to contribute to their school and social integration.

Expectations towards teachers are inevitably becoming more complex, consistent with the higher expectations from graduates of the education system. Each teacher must have, at a developed level, the skills they want to form in their students. At the same time, they must ensure the well-being of each student, stimulate their motivation for learning, support them to strengthen their self-esteem and resilience, and work adapted to students belonging to at-risk categories. Participation in learning communities, professional development programs and collaboration with management teams and other community actors become conditions for the successful fulfillment of these complex roles.

In what follows, we exemplify through an individualized training project

We started from the information that: a global knowledge of the student is needed (pedagogical, didactic, social, psychological); to gradually and concretely establish the objectives; to diversify the teaching methods and techniques used/not used; to combine the forms of organization (frontal, microgroup, individual).

A. Individualized instruction begins with the needs of a single student:

1. The contribution made is presented by the developmental stages of a student.
2. To identify special requirements.
3. To select the strategy that focuses on exploring qualities and deficiencies.
4. To explore existing resources to support the participation of student with SEN in the educational process.
5. To develop an educational, corrective, personalized project, developed through teamwork.
6. To activate the authentic psychic potential of the child with SEN.
7. To manage the psychic development of the student with SEN.
8. To establish the objectives (development and application of a methodological approach).
9. To establish the method/methods.
10. To establish the purpose (presentation of an example of good practice in the recovery process of the student with SEN)
11. To choose the forms of organization: private-individual instruction.

B. Actions integrated into the realization structure: teaching-communication; learning-reception-assimilation; evaluation carried out throughout the activity:

1. To facilitate the connection between child protection services and the school.
2. To ensure the responsible and complementary training of professionals in the system (school) including the family.
3. To start from the idea that students are different, have different levels of understanding.
4. To design the tasks, rhythm and school activities according to the characteristics of each student.

C. Establishment of specific (collaborative) strategies: to contribute to the socialization of students and determine the continuous curricular adaptation to the student's requirements and needs.

D. Supporting didactic principles: equal rights, equal opportunities, access to any form of education, early intervention, cooperation, partnership, ensuring support in the community.

E. Role of supporting teacher: facilitator by creating adapted teaching materials.

F. Type of approach required by supporting teacher: organizing consolidation-practice moments through different approaches; students with SEN have limited capacities for distributive attention when writing/reading/calculating.

G. Advantage of supporting teacher's intervention: implementing specific techniques for managing the behaviors of students with SEN.

H. Elements of concept/project of individualized instruction

The following is the pedagogical version of a teaching project with the stages provided by Professor Constantin Cucoș in „*General Pedagogy*”, by lesson types (teaching, evaluation, consolidation, etc.) less the contents that will be adapted depending on the student's deficiencies [4, 5].

The mixed lesson: aims to achieve, in approximately equal measure, several teaching goals or tasks: communication, systematization, fixation, verification. It is the most frequently encountered type of lesson in educational practice, in small classes (due to the diversity of activities involved and the multiple tasks they perform).

Lesson Moments:

1. *Organizational moment*
2. *Verification of the acquired contents* – verification of the topic, verification of the knowledge, skills, abilities acquired by the student;
3. *Preparing students for the reception of new knowledge* – is usually achieved through an introductory conversation, in which previously acquired knowledge by students is updated, relevant to the new topic, by presenting problem situations, for overcoming which new knowledge is necessary;
4. *Specifying the title and objectives* – communication must be done in an accessible form, what is expected of them at the end of activity;
5. *Communication/acquiring new knowledge* – through a methodical strategy adapted to the objectives, the content of topic and the students and by using these teaching aids that can facilitate and streamline the achievement of this didactic task;
6. *Fixing and systematizing the taught contents* – through repetition of applicative exercises;
7. *Explanations for continuing learning at home and for completing the topic.*

The approaches of learning activity, developed through occasional auxiliary means (through an “occasional recourse to a relevant approach of another school subject” and through systematic means (through a „systematic recourse to a relevant approach of another subject in order to achieve an objective of a study program”) are adapted to the peculiarities and training needs of learners with SEN [3, p. 242].

Conclusions

Curriculum reform is a priority issue of contemporary pedagogy and is an important component of the curriculum, metaphorically translated by some authors as the „backbone of the educational system”, due to the growing capacity to introduce value changes in the curriculum - representing an essential premise in achieving learning. If in the traditional vision the contents of education were focused on learning to know and, to a lesser extent, on learning to do through a strictly disciplinary approach to knowledge, currently

the achievement of the other two types of learning is also necessary - learning to live together with others and learning to be, which, at the level of contents, means overcoming the limits of intradisciplinarity, by promoting integrated contents, which achieve a unification of knowledge and are based primarily on the efforts of the educated.

The process of curricular adaptation of school programs is a current issue given the difficulties encountered by mainstream teachers who teach in classes where students with SEN are integrated. In conclusion, the achievement of curricular adaptations through a joint effort of all involved actors (teaching staff, support teachers, specialists) is the ideal way to efficiently design an adapted program for children with disabilities, having all the prerequisites for its successful implementation.

References:

1. BOCOȘ, M. *Curriculumul școlar. Conținutul învățământului. Pedagogie. Suporturi pentru formarea profesorilor*. M. Ionescu, V. Chiș, (coord.). Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2021.
2. CREȚU, C. *Curriculum diferențiat și personalizat*. Iași: Polirom, 1998.
3. CRISTEA, S. *Dicționar de pedagogie*. Chișinău-București: Litera Internațional, 2000.
4. CUCOȘ, C. *Pedagogie (Ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită)*. Iași: Polirom, 2006.
5. CUCOȘ, C. *Pedagogie (Ediția a III-a revăzută și adăugită)*. Iași: Polirom, 2014.
6. FULLAN, M. *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, 3rd ed. Teachers College Press. New York, NY, 2001.
7. *Ghid pentru cadre didactice de sprijin (CDS)*. UNICEF. Editura Vanemonde, 2005.
8. IOSIFESCU, Ș. (coord.), CÂMPEAN, A., CHICINAȘ, L., DRAGOMIR, M. *Management educațional pentru instituțiile de învățământ*. București: ISE-MEC, 2001.

Data about Author:

Florin CHEIA, PhD Student at Doctoral School of Humanities and Education Sciences, Department of Education Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Sociology and Social Work, Moldova State University

E-mail: florincheia@yahoo.com

ORCID-ID: 0009-0002-4044-8996.

Presented on 18.09.2024