

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCHOOL SUCCESS IN THE SELF-ASSESSMENT OF A PUPIL WITH THE LEARNING DISABILITY

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Abstract: If pupils are successful in school, their self-confidence will be supported and they will easily believe in their success in their life. Pupils with the specific learning disabilities are losing their confidence in their abilities and they start to believe in an inefficiency of their effort. School assessment participates in shaping mental parts of the personality of each pupil, because it influences the area of pupils' confidence, their consciousness "I", their self-assessment, the area of their aspirations, motivational structures and their position in a group. It markedly influences their relationships with other people and their perspectives and opportunities to enforce.

Keywords: self-assessment, self-concept, self-assessment of a pupil, specific learning disability, school self-assessment, pupil with the specific learning disability..

1 Introduction

Specific learning disability is a phenomenon, which changes the self-assessment of a child and lowers its confidence and self-esteem. A preservation of self-confidence is important, because it helps to resist a different difficulty connected with the specific disability (Czudnowski-Mardell, 2001 quoted in Vágnerová, Krejčová, 2006).

A persistent failure of children with the specific learning disabilities often worsens their position in the class. Pupils with the specific learning disabilities have worse self-assessment than their schoolmates without these problems, but this self-assessment is lowered mainly in the area influenced by their disability (Chapman, Tunmer, 2003 quoted in Vágnerová, Krejčová, 2006). Children with dyslexia have worse self-assessment only in the reading, alternatively in other language skills, but they consider themselves as the average even above the average in other areas. It seems that these children do not have a tendency to evaluate their results as negatively as their teachers (Aldridge, 2004 quoted in Vágnerová, Krejčová, 2006). Usually, it is very difficult for pupils with the specific learning disabilities to equalize with others, because they are not able to work at the same level. They have often permanent the worst ratings. Despite that surroundings behave to these pupils with the empathy and understanding, they often fully know their weaknesses. A repeated experience of failure always raises a probability of a deterioration of self-assessment and a formation of insufficient self-confidence (Svoboda, Krejčířová, Vágnerová, 2001). There is a risk of development of inferior feelings because of inability of these pupils to handle school activities in a comparison with their schoolmates (Matějček, 1989 quoted in Šporcrová a.i., 2002). This feelings might also show in a different area. There might be a general negative attribution when are these children evaluated as generally unable and reluctant to work. They are attributed by low competences and nobody expects anything positive. These children feel a distrust in achieving of better results and they cannot preserve sufficient self-confidence (Svoboda, Krejčířová, Vágnerová, 2001, Vágnerová, Krejčová, 2006). Settle and Milich (1999) claim that if children are exposed to a frequent failure, it is probable that a strategy of learnt powerlessness will develop (Kotrusová, 2005). Repeated failures lower the motivation to learn. A pupil has bad experience and that is the reason why he do not expect that he can be successful sometime and he stop with his effort (Svoboda, Krejčířová, Vágnerová, 2001). The source of a frustration of children with the learning disabilities is an inability to satisfy expectations of others. It brings a rage and anger toward school, teachers and parents. A child can often suppress its anger in school and it becomes extremely passive (Gabrišová, 2006 quoted in Tichá 2007/08). However, some pupils continue to study despite difficulties and lower satisfaction. The attitude

of a pupil depends on many factors: personal features, general stability, resistance to burdens, social support of family, good social position among peers etc. (Svoboda, Krejčířová, Vágnerová, 2001). Pupils acquire attributions of personality in the education process, which condition the following development of their self-concept (Kranz, 2004 quoted in Schusterová, Štochmalová 2004). School is an institution which allows own realization to a child and simultaneously it is a significant determinant of creating their self-concept. The quality of a self-assessment has a major emotional and social importance and it signals the degree of an adjustment with a difficulty of school failure (Vágnerová, Krejčová, 2006). It is important for activities in school what the child thinks about itself and about its learning competences. "Self-assessment is a base of a particular expectation and therefore it influences the motivation to learn" (Schusterová, Štochmalová, 2004). Self-assessment of children is influenced by opinions of teachers, experience and the influence of teachers and general climate of the class. It is also connected to marks and it is interesting that the self-assessment is more connected to an emotional attitude to school than to real own performances when it is correlated with fears from school (Vágnerová, 1995 quoted in Kosová, 1997).

2 Research study

School is an institution where you are also rated besides gathering knowledge, skills and habits (Vašašová, 2004). All rating processes and their demonstrations, which directly influence school teaching, are considered for the rating (Slavík, 1999 quoted in Vašašová, 2004). One of important factors is a teacher and his rating which can differently influence a creation of assessment and self-assessment competences of pupils (Kolář, Šikulová, 2009).

Assessment of an individual is connected with their social need – to be evaluated mainly positively, objectively and fairly. It is also connected to a need of success, which is one of the most progressive spiritual need of people (Velikanič 1973, quoted in Vašašová 2004).

The goal of the research, which was realized in elementary schools for pupils with the physical disability in Bratislava, was to find out the level and the structure of school self-assessment of pupils with the learning disabilities in the conditions of education in common learning process. At the beginning, we assumed that the level of school self-assessment is lowered among pupils with the specific learning disabilities.

The basic diagnostic instrument was the Student's Perception of Ability Scale – SPAS. Authors of this questionnaire are F.J. Boersma and J.U. W. Chapman, who originally chose 200 questions for pupils from the elementary school which were related to school performance and attitudes of pupils to the school. In Czechoslovakia, SPAS was used in 1981 for the first time. It was among children with dyslexia. Authors were Z. Matějček and M. Vágnerová. It was also successful among chronically ill children and children with different disabilities.

Lower age line (recommended) is formed by children with "social level of reading" (60 words per minute). The pupils from the 3rd grade are in this group. Upper age line (recommended) is formed by the pupils from the 9th grade from the elementary school. Original test SPAS created by F.J. Boersma and J.U. W. Chapman was changed and adapted to our school conditions. The test has 6 scales with 8 items which are marked in the followed way: general competences, Math, Reading, Orthography, Writing, self-confidence. We did not notice bigger problems during the administration. SPAS consists from 48 instructions. Child do a ring on answers YES and NO. Results were evaluated and processed. We recorded results in the graphs and tables.

The research sample was 125 pupils (44 girls and 81 boys) with the specific development learning disabilities who were educated in common elementary school. In the sample were pupils from the 5th to 9th grade of common elementary school. First group consists of 43 pupils from elementary school ES Kuliškova 8 in Bratislava. The second group consists of 82 pupils from the elementary school ES Jelenia 16 in Bratislava.

Tab. 1 Average sten rate measured by authors of SPAS in particular items

Scale	Children with failing grades		Children with excellent grades		Chronically ill children
	B	G	B	G	
1.	3,3	2,9	7,7	8,5	6,8
2.	3,7	3,3	7,6	8,2	6,5
3.	4,2	3,3	5,8	6,9	5,6
4.	3,9	3,5	7,7	6,8	6,5
5.	5,1	4,9	6,4	6,5	6,6
6.	3,9	3,3	7,8	8	6,3
TS	3,5	3,2	7,7	8,5	6,5

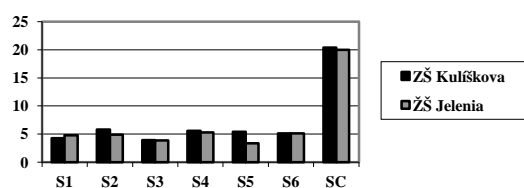
Legend: 1.general competences, 2.Math,3. Reading, 4.Orthography, 5.Writing, 6.Self-confidence,TS – total score, B-boys, G-girls

Tab. 2 Average rates – rough score, sten in scales SPAS – ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia

	ZŠ Kuliškova	ZŠ Jelenia	l. sign.
HS1	2,37	2,80	0,177
S1	4,30	4,77	0,129
HS2	3,98	3,00	0,032
S2	5,79	4,89	0,037
HS3	3,53	3,65	0,767
S3	3,93	3,87	0,757
HS4	3,56	3,13	0,322
S4	5,58	5,32	0,793
HS5	3,88	5,32	0,814
S5	5,40	3,35	0,312
HS6	3,12	5,15	0,544
S6	5,12	5,15	0,739
TS	20,16	19,85	0,841
S	4,58	4,59	0,783

Graph 1 Sten in scales SPAS – comparison ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia

Comparison ES Kuliškova - ES Jelenia



From the table 2 an graph 1 can be seen that average measured rates in average rough score and also in sten are among pupils ZŠ Kulišková and pupils ES Jelenia almost the same. The statistic significance reach only in the scale Math. When we focus on average measured rates in the particular scales of SPAS, pupils from ES Kuliškova reach higher average measured rates in the scale Math and in the scale Orthography. The pupils from both schools reach almost the same average rates in the scales Reading and Self-confidence. The pupils with the specific learning disabilities from both schools evaluate their intellectual competences, readiness and successfulness as very low.

Tab. 3 ZŠ Kuliškova – ZŠ Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades pupils with excellent grades and chronically ill children

ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia sten in scales –general

Pupils with failing grades B	3,3
Pupils with failing grades G	2,9
Pupils with excellent grades B	7,7
Pupils with excellent grades G	8,5
Chronically ill children B	6,8
ES Kuliškova	4,3
ES Jelenia	4,77

Legend: ES – elementary school, B – boys, G – girls

Tab. 4 ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades, pupils with excellent grades and chronically ill children

ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales – math

Pupils with failing grades B	3,7
Pupils with failing grades G	3,3
Pupils with excellent grades B	7,6
Pupils with excellent grades G	8,2
Chronically ill children B	6,5
ES Kuliškova	5,79
ES Jelenia	4,89

Legend: ZŠ – elementary school, CH – boys, D – girls

Tab. 5 ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades pupils with excellent grades chronically ill children

ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales reading

Pupils with failing grades B	4,2
Pupils with failing grades G	3,3
Pupils with excellent grades B	5,8
Pupils with excellent grades G	6,9
Chronically ill children B	5,6
ES Kuliškova	3,93
ES Jelenia	3,87

Legend: ES – elementary school, b – boys, g – girls

Tab. 6 ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades pupils with excellent grades and chronically ill children

ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales orthography

Pupils with failing grades B	3,9
Pupils with failing grades G	3,5
Pupils with excellent grades B	7,7
Pupils with excellent grades G	6,8
Chronically ill children B	6,5
ES Kuliškova	5,58
ES Jelenia	5,32

Legend: ES – elementary school, b – boys, g – girls

Tab. 7 ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades pupils with excellent grades chronically ill children

ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales writing

Pupils with failing grades B	5,1
Pupils with failing grades G	4,9
Pupils with excellent grades B	6,4
Pupils with excellent grades G	6,5
Chronically ill children B	6,6
ES Kuliškova	5,4
ES Jelenia	3,35

Legend: ES – elementary school, B – boys, G – girls

Tab. 8 ES Kuliškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades, pupils with excellent grades and chronically ill children

ES Kulíškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales –self-confidence

Pupils with failing grades B	3,9
Pupils with failing grades G	3,3
Pupils with excellent grades B	7,8
Pupils with excellent grades G	8
Chronically ill children B	6,3
ES Kulíškova	5,12
ES Jelenia	3,35

Legend: ES – elementary school, B – boys, G – girls

Tab. 9 ES Kulíškova – ES Jelenia – sten in scales SPAS in comparison with the group of pupils with failing grades, pupils with excellent grades and chronically ill children

ES Kulíškova –ES Jelenia – sten in scales TS

Pupils with failing grades B	3,5
Pupils with failing grades G	3,2
Pupils with excellent grades B	7,7
Pupils with excellent grades G	8,5
Chronically ill children B	6,5
ES Kulíškova	4,58
ES Jelenia	4,59

Legend: ES – elementary school, B – boys, G – girls

Average measured rates of school self-assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities were compared with average measured rates from the control group which consists of children with excellent grades, children with failing grades and chronically ill children (graph 1 - 8). We found out from the results that school self-assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities is in comparison with school self-assessment of pupils – boys and girls with excellent grades significantly lowered as the authors were mentioned. We noticed the same result in the comparison with chronically ill children. In the scale Reading, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities show lower school self-assessment in the comparison with the boys with failing grades. Higher self-assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities than the self-assessment of boys and girls with failing grades were found out in scales: general competences, Math, Orthography and in the total score. In the scale Reading, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities evaluated themselves higher only in the comparison with the girls with failing grades. In the scale Writing, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities from ES Jelenia reached the lowest self-assessment from the all compared groups. That means that pupils from ES Jelenia evaluate their Writing lower in comparison with the pupils from ES Kulíškova. The pupils from ES Jelenia show significantly lower level of school self-assessment in comparison with boys and girls with excellent grades, boys and girls with failing grades and also in comparison with standardized results of the chronically ill children. We noticed identical results in the scale self-confident. There is one difference that the rates of pupils from ES Jelenia are almost identical with the standardized rates of the girls with failing grades. We can state from the previous results that the pupils with the specific learning disabilities have lower self-assessment than the pupils with the excellent grades and also the chronically ill children, but they have higher school self-assessment than the pupils with failing grades.

Tab. 10 Average rates – rough score, sten in scales SPAS – Boys – Girls together

	Boys	Girls	l. sign.
HS1	2,74	2,25	0,669
S1	4,75	4,34	0,318
HS2	3,65	2,75	0,050
S2	5,51	4,64	0,060
HS3	3,44	3,91	0,271
S3	3,84	3,98	0,968
HS4	3,07	3,66	0,125
S4	5,67	4,93	0,016
HS5	3,46	4,91	0,002
S5	5,68	5,41	0,552
HS6	3,35	3,14	0,736
S6	5,30	4,84	0,212
TS	19,49	20,82	0,495
S	4,74	4,30	0,096

Legend: HS1-HS6 – rozgh score, S1 – general competences, S2 – Math, S3 – Reading, S4 – Orthography, S5 – Writing, S6 – Self-confidence, TS – total score, S – total sten, l. sign. – level of significance

In our research, we assumed that in the school self-assessment of the children with the specific learning disabilities will be significantly lowered in scale Reading.

In the table 3, we see average measured rates in particular scales of all boys and girls from ES Kulíškova and ES Jelenia. Statistically significant rates were reached in scales Math and Orthography. The lowest average rates reached girls and boys in the scale Reading. The difference in the total score between boys and girls from both schools were minimal, but boys reached better score than girls and that means in the practice that boys have higher school self-assessment than girls, but it is only minimal.

In the scale Reading, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities reached the lowest rates (graph 4) in comparison with the standardized rates among the girls with excellent grades, boys with excellent grades, chronically ill children and boys with failing grades. The group of the girls with failing grades results in the scale Reading even lower school self-assessment than the group of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities. Boys and girls with the specific learning disabilities (tab. 3) reached in the scale Reading the lowest reached rates. It means that they have problems in this area and they negatively judge their reading performances. The research also shows that older and younger pupils with the specific learning disabilities evaluate their reading competences very low in the scale Reading in comparison with authors of the questionnaire. Realized research also shows the reality that average measured rates of the pupils educated in the inclusive environment are the lowest in the scale Reading. The average rates in the scale Reading were also the lowest among the pupils with the specific learning disabilities integrated in the common class and also among the pupils in the special classes for the pupils with the specific learning disabilities. The exception is formed by the pupils from the special classes for the children with the dysphasia. They show the lowest average rates in the scale General competences. In generally, we can state that the school self-assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities is very low in the scale Reading.

In the case of the rate of mathematical competences, we assumed that in the scale Math will be the level of the school self-assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities significantly lowered. The pupils with the specific learning disabilities (graph 3) evaluate their mathematical competences and successfulness in this subject significantly low in comparison with boys and girls with excellent grades. The same average rates show also in comparison with the chronically ill children. In comparison with boys and girls with failing grades, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities reach better

average score. That means that the pupils with failing grades (boys and girls) show lower school self-assessment in the scale Math in comparison with the pupils with the specific learning disabilities. The difference between average measured rates of boys and girls with the specific learning disabilities in the scale Math is in favour of boys. Boys evaluate higher their performances in Math in comparison with the girls with the specific learning disabilities. In the comparison of the boys with the specific learning disabilities from both participated schools (ES Jelenia, ES Kulíškova) was found out a statistically significant difference in favour of the boys from ES Kulíškova. It is very possible that some from the special class from ES Jelenia consists of mainly boys with dyscalculia and with another specific learning disability. In comparison of the girls with the specific learning disabilities from both schools, the better score have the girls from ES Jelenia, but they did not reach statistically significant rate. Statistically significant difference was measured between younger and older pupils with the specific learning disabilities from ES Jelenia in favour of younger pupils.

The statistically significant difference was measured in the scale Math between the pupils with the specific learning disabilities integrated in the common class in ES Kulíškova and the pupils with the specific learning disabilities integrated in the common class in ES Jelenia. In this case have the pupils from ES Kulíškova better results. The statistically significant difference was also found out between the pupils from the special classes from ES Kulíškova and the pupils integrated in the common class from ES Jelenia in favour of the special classes. In the case of the comparison between special classes for the pupils with the specific learning disabilities from ES Kulíškova and the special classes for the pupils with dysphasia from ES Jelenia, there were statistically significant higher average rates among the pupils from the special classes for the pupils with the specific learning disabilities from ES Kulíškova. In this case, the low school self-assessment of the pupils with the dysphasia was formed because of this disorder. We can state that the pupils with the specific learning disabilities evaluate better their mathematic competences and knowledge when they are educated in the special classes for these pupils.

It results from the showed average measured rates that in the scale Math, the pupils with the specific learning disabilities have lower self-assessment than the chronically ill pupils and the pupils with excellent grades, but they have higher self-assessment than the pupils with failing grades

3 Conclusion

Self-confidence and the confidence in own abilities is important during school activities and even more in the life of individual at all. The results of the research confirmed the premise that school self-assessment of pupils with the specific learning disabilities is in all scales of the SPAS low. Pupils with the specific learning disabilities evaluate their school performances similar in comparison with average measured rates of excellent prosper pupils and also with chronically ill children. The research shows that pupils with the specific learning disabilities educated in special classes of elementary schools have higher self-confidence and school self-assessment. They evaluate higher mainly their general intellectual abilities, brightness and readiness and they also evaluate more positively their performances in Math than pupils educated in common classes. Pupils, which are educated in a special class with other schoolmates with similar difficulties and have similar problems, feel more self-confident and have a chance feel a success more often than in a common class with pupils without this disability. The education of pupils with the specific learning disabilities in a special class with the Individual Education Plan, such as the education of integrated pupils in common classes, would be the solution of problem mentioned by Sternberg. In case the results of researches about the self-assessment of pupils will reach similar rates like in our research in the favour of education of pupils in special classes, it is not possible to definitely agree with the opinion. The integration of pupils with

the specific learning disabilities would be successful in the case when the measured rates would be in favour of the integrated pupils. In that case we would consider the education in special classes as a brake in the remedy of the special disability. It is important to build the confidence in themselves and the feeling of unique in these children. It is also important to teach them accept failures and motivate them to the remedy not only by comparing with a more successful schoolmate.

The results of the research prove the lowered school assessment of the pupils with the specific learning disabilities. The tendency of these pupils to satisfy the need of self-realization by not always appropriate mean should be a memento for each teacher and expert, who works with the child, that he should try to change approach to these pupils. The change of the approach in practice means that we should not judge and evaluate pupils because of their school performances, but we should look for the unique of the personality in each of them and cultivate a joy from activities in which they are successful.

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