

Psycho-educational Characteristics of Roma Children.

Effectiveness of the FIE-Basic Cognitive Developing Program

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Abstract

The present study discusses the possible reasons for the inefficiency of the education of Roma children in Romania. In order to assess the eventual learning disabilities in Roma first graders, we measured the psycho-educational abilities of 77 Roma elementary school children with the following psychometrical tests: Raven's intelligence test, Coloured Progressive Matrices, Bender-B test of perceptual-motor skills and Meeting Street School Test (MSSST) and compared their results to the national standards. We also applied a Dynamic Assessment (formative) tool, using Feuerstein's evaluation methods to compare Roma children's performance on absurd thinking, empathy and identification of emotions with the performances of their Hungarian mates. As an intervention program we applied Feuerstein's Orientation of Dots-Basic program on two small groups, a total of 10 Roma children. We examined the effectiveness of this intervention using the above mentioned MSSST test, and we noticed remarkable improvements as a result of our short time intervention. Our results suggest that poverty, socio-cultural deprivation, and lack of preschool education impede on the capacity of Roma children to learn according to the prescribed syllabus, and result in very low school-performance of Roma children, which can be overcome with differentiated educational programs tailored for the special educational needs of these students.

Keywords

cognitive development, poverty, Roma education, dynamic vs. static measurements