

## Time management. Challenges in the pandemic period

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### Abstract

The COVID 19 Pandemic has changed life to everybody. In current social context, marked by regulations and restrictions, each person, daily, shapes his/her time-table and approaches “time” from a new perspective.

The current paper tries to reveal the time management’ difficulties that teachers faced in on-line activities with pupils with deficiencies.

The conclusions that we found, based on a survey on 28 teachers first didactic degree, give the experts in special education the opportunity to a better: understanding of time – as educational resource; planning the educational activities; center on the utility, for pupils with deficiencies, of the taught information.

**Keywords:** time management, teachers, pupils with deficiencies, special education.

### 1. Theoretical background

One of the constants of any activity, time management has been and continues to be the subject of research in many disciplines: sociology (Flaherty, 2003), psychology (Burt & Kemp, 1994), children's education (Liu, Rijmen, MacCann and Roberts, 2009).), management (Claessens, Van Eerde, Rutte and Roe, 2004), consumer behaviour (Feldman and Hornik, 1981), etc.

Time management can be defined as the way of making decisions used by individuals to structure, protect and adapt their time to the changing conditions of the social environment in which they live (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017).

Time has been studied through its two central approaches: as an objective phenomenon, which exists independently of human action; or as a subjective phenomenon, socially constructed from human action (Orlikowski, & Yates, 2002.).

Gurvitch offered a complex model of time analysis that highlights a number of eight "social times" each of them intervening, to a greater or lesser extent, both at the macro-social and microsocial level: lasting time, deceptive time, capricious time, cyclical time, delayed time, alternating time, advance time, explosive time. (Apud, Gurvitch, 1964 cited by Subrt, 2015).

At the educational level, time management is a key element of the activity of each teacher. In 2007, Gherguț specified that the teacher's time is the result of his two forms of objectification: the educational time spent in school and the educational time spent outside school.

Also in the educational context, starting from the fact that the fundamental activity of the student is learning, Voiculescu in 2004, was talking about learning time. The learning time must be considered as a central landmark of the student's school activity in relation to which he measures the other components of the educational activity.

Time management is extremely complex and is objectified through four types of essential behaviors: 1. “time assessment behavior, 2. time management and self-awareness; 3. behavior planning; 4. monitoring behavior”. (Khan & all, 2016, p.253). Each of these behaviors is nuanced and differentiated depending on the age of the subject, his social-relational-value experience, the social context to which the report is made.

According to research conducted in 2008, at the educational level, time management is streamlined by each individual through specific parameters: patience, analytical ability, flexibility, information awareness, time available, time allocated, time spent, academic learning time, pace and transition time from one activity to another.

At the level of special education, time is the unit of reporting both for the realization of the personalized and individualized intervention program, but especially for the evaluation, the stage (degree) of achieving the objectives and the progress / regression registered at the level of behaviors of each student with special educational needs.

## **2. Methods of research**

The micro-research we undertook was based on an opinion poll, structured by 21 items on the difficulties generated by online learning that were reflected in the time management of educational activities conducted by teachers with children with disabilities. The questionnaire aimed at capturing the difficulties on three dimensions: difficulties in organizing and planning the contents, difficulties in choosing / using the educational resources. Each type of difficulty recorded was performed on a Lickert type scale with 5 dimensions (from 1-5, where 1 represented the lowest value, and 5 the highest value). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was: Cronbach Alpha,  $\alpha = .757$ .

Each dimension analyzed became the objective of the research, and the hypothesis considered was: teaching-learning activities with students with disabilities in the virtual environment are performed with specific difficulties that are objectified in time management.

## **3. Participants**

The micro-research was carried out on a group of 28 full-time teachers in special education, from urban areas, who have first degree teaching, aged between 30-47 years ( $M = 36.6$ ,  $Std = 1.376$ ), 74 % women, 26% men. Selected subjects, graduates of Special Psychopedagogy (44%), psychology (39%), education sciences - pedagogy (15%), have a seniority in special education between 8-22 years.

## **4. Procedure**

The micro-research was conducted between September and November 2020 through the online administration of opinion questionnaires.

The micro-research was conducted in accordance with the G.D.P.R rules on the protection of personal data, based on the informed consent of the investigated subjects. The consent of the subjects for data collection, data processing, presentation in synthetic form of data at scientific conferences was requested and obtained. The consent of the subjects for the transmission of the collected data to third parties who were not involved in the research was not obtained.

### **5. Data analysis and data interpretation**

Data analysis revealed a uniform distribution of data, with a skewness index between .965 and 1.852, at a standard error between .352 and 1.067; with a kurtosis index of .796 to 1.668, at a standard error of .468 to .993

The collected data will be analyzed, below, for each dimension (approached as an objective of the research) in which the difficulties reflected in the time management were noted.

#### *5.1 Identifying the difficulties encountered in organizing and planning the contents that have been objectified in time management*

The data were processed and systematized in table no.1.

Table no.1. Difficulties in organizing and planning the contents generated by online teaching to deficient students targeted in time management

Type of difficulty recorded	Ma	Std	% out of total difficulties mentioned
content selection	3.18	.365	2%
making information accessible in the format taught online	4.37	.522	45%
relating the contents to events in the life of the subjects	4.64	.579	62.50%
the usefulness of the information transmitted to students	4.08	.417	23%
schematization of contents	4.29	.444	31.8%
dosing of tasks per unit time	4.02	.410	17.2%
systematization of the conclusions related to the taught contents	3.77	.396	6.80%

We note, from the data of table no.1, that at the level of the subjects investigated by us, that one of the major difficulties they had was related to the way in which the contents taught (according to the analytical programs) were related to the events in the subjects' lives. The situation should not surprise us, considering the fact that, for students with disabilities, the teaching-learning act involves valuing the experiences of the subjects. However, considering the fact that their experience is limited in relation to the type and degree of deficiency and in turn limits the transfer of knowledge, skills, teachers investigated related the contents that were taught with common social events, present to any type of family (including in the families of children with disabilities), regardless of the environment of origin: birthday, shopping with the family, going to school, Christmas, etc. Through this, the efficiency of the teaching-learning act increased, due to the fact that the notions formed have a greater stability as they were accompanied by a high emotional load, with a strong personalized meaning.

A second difficulty noted by the investigated teachers was the accessibility of knowledge in the online environment. It is in fact the way in which teachers who have worked online have tested the effectiveness of methods, teaching-learning strategies, but especially have adapted these methods, procedures, strategies to the new educational context. It is natural that this whole process of adaptation leads to a resizing of priorities in time management, especially if we take into account the lack of systematic teacher training courses focused on teaching online, but the existence of difficulties in connecting to the Internet.

The other identified elements only reinforce the fact that the process of organizing and planning the contents has been resized and is based on a set of relational-value criteria generated by the specificity of the beneficiaries (students with disabilities).

### *5.2 Identifying the difficulties encountered in choosing / using the educational resources that have been objectified in time management*

The data were processed and summarized in table no.2.

Table no.2. Difficulties in choosing / using educational resources for online teaching to students with objectified deficiencies in time management

Type of difficulty recorded	Ma	Std	% out of total difficulties mentioned
avoiding the verbalism of images	4.11	.522	26.8%
the choice of resources according to the manifest educational need of the students	3.89	.483	11.7%
difficulties in prioritizing educational resources	3.55	.419	8.9%
action dynamics required of students	4.41	.568	39%
the difficulties generated by the use of the educational resource per unit of time	4.57	.612	55%

From the data of table no. 2, we find that the greatest difficulty was generated by the use in relation to the unit of time and is mainly due to the fact *that the teacher could no longer control, model the educational environment, and the feedback received from students was limited only to late replies. Students with disabilities in the online teaching act needed multiple stimulation to achieve the objectives of each activity and, in essence, a longer period of execution of tasks.*

In the same context, in the act of teaching-learning with students with disabilities in online environment, difficulties were determined by the dynamics of the actions related to the execution of work tasks by them. *These are in fact behavioral delays between the stimulus and the behavioral response throughout the process, mainly due to the accommodation in the learning task of students with disabilities.*

We find it interesting to note that, highlighted by the teachers investigated, the difficulties generated by avoiding the verbalism of images, games used both in the learning part, but especially in the consolidation part with students with disabilities. The appearance of numerous online educational resources, of individualized files is a beneficial thing for the act of teaching-learning in the virtual environment. *But, paraphrasing Piaget, the process of selecting them is a*

*difficult one, especially from the perspective of avoiding the phenomenon of overloading deficient students and preventing the installation of their reactive-behavioral stereotypes.*

**We can say that the difficulties generated by the use of educational resources with students with disabilities and which have been objectified in time management have been and still are determined by the difference between the desire of teachers to permanently stimulate students and their real potential.**

*5.3 Identify the difficulties encountered in assessing the results of deficient students who have objectified in time management*

*The data were processed and presented synthetically in table no.3.*

*Table no.3. Difficulties in evaluating the learning outcomes with online deficient students objectified in time management*

Type of difficulty recorded	Ma	Std	% out of total difficulties mentioned
differentiated approach of students in assessment	4.38	.548	38.2%
non-compliance by the student with the deadlines for completing the tasks	4.69	.577	44.7 %
avoiding the execution of tasks by students	4.25	.516	17.1%

We note, from the data systematized in table no. 3 that the difficulties of the evaluation process act in a systemic form and were determined, on the one hand, by the adaptation by each teacher of the objective criteria for evaluating the learning outcomes of students with disabilities to the particularities of the online teaching-learning process. , to the behavior objectified by them during the activities, and on the other hand, by the delay or omission of the posting of the homework, the evaluation sheets by the parents of the students or by the students with disabilities. The lack of face-to-face contact of the child with the teacher, facilitated the flight of intellectual effort, the objectification of the mechanisms of "conservation" of resources by students (childish justifications for abdominal pain, headache, dizziness, etc.; greater recovery after requests for previous educational activities, the emergence of other concerns of greater significance for students, etc.)

***Therefore, the difficulties encountered in the process of evaluating the learning outcomes of students with disabilities are determined by the decrease of students' co-participation in this process and by the limitations generated by online activities.***

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

Our micro-research wanted to highlight, at the level of teachers who teach in special education, the difficulties objectified at the level of time management, which were determined by the teaching-learning act performed with students with disabilities in the virtual environment.

The obtained results validate the research hypothesis.

The conclusions obtained allow

- a) Better understanding of the specificity of the teaching-learning act for students with disabilities in the virtual environment;
- b) Reconsideration of time as a strategic educational resource;
- c) Focusing, in the act of teaching-learning of students with disabilities on the usefulness of the information transmitted to them taught to students with disabilities;
- d) Efficient use of educational resources;
- e) Better grading of educational tasks in relation to the resources and potential of students with disabilities

The conclusions obtained can contribute to

- a) Efficient use of educational resources
- b) Development of exchanges of good practices with colleagues from other schools.

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