

CREATION OF A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOSTERING THE PERSONAL GROWTH AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract:

The School for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Ljubljana admits secondary students with one of the following disabilities: a complete or partial hearing impairment, speech-language impairment, or autism spectrum disorders. Since even modified educational programmes and advanced training of the employed professionals do not guarantee effective and quality educational experiences, we offer specific activities and selected topics within specially-designed modules. Prior to entry decision the interested primary student is familiarised with our school and our programmes via the information session, the school tour, and various workshop presentations. Since individuals with autism require a lot of time to adjust to new changes, their successful transition to the new school environment can only be ensured via proper preparation prior to the beginning of the new school year. Our experience proves that the learning process cannot be initiated and effectively conducted without proper preparation, so we offer a wide range of activities promoting the safety, the personal growth and the professional development of our students, comprising friendship-inducing camps, Monday school week and event preparation sessions, Friday reflection discussions and creative free time management workshops, emotional literacy lessons, social communication skills training via the Theatre of the Oppressed workshops, financial literacy and active citizenship sessions, optional student flat accommodation, and independent living training. Our educational programmes aim at promoting the highest possible degree of personal autonomy of individuals with special needs, based on their specific disabilities, even within an unadjustable environment, which increases labour market participation, creates more employment opportunities, and promotes independent living.

Keywords: learning environment, secondary school students with special needs, quality education, personal growth, learning for life.