



# Students with Disabilities as a Source of Fragmentation of Educational Practice



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## Policy vs. Practice

- institutional structures
- inflexible or irrelevant curricula
- inappropriate systems of assessment and examination
- negative attitudes and beliefs about some children's values and ability to learn
- .....





## Content

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Inclusive education and inclusive policy in Croatia

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Project Evidence based educational intervention

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Epistemological research

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Conclusion

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# Inclusive education

- process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community and curricula of mainstream schools
- „special” and „general” teacher education
- contextual barriers and possibilities for inclusive pedagogy and practice within schools and education in general
- the quality of inclusive process'
  - central issue is not a question of the abilities of children, but what have we done that all children in school may exercise their right to the best possible education

# Inclusive education in Croatia


- Law on Education in Primary and Secondary School (2008)
  - to care for basic needs of all students
  - to develop conditions for their healthy psychological and physical development as well as social well-being
  - to prevent behavioural disorders in students
  - to care for the safety and success of every student
  - etc.
- National Pedagogical Standards (2008)
- reduce the number of students in classes that include students with developmental difficulties
- new participants in the inclusive education process, such as mobile teams, teaching assistants, sign language interpreters, etc.

## Students with developmental difficulties have rights

- to delayed school attendance
  - to individualised and adapted programmes
  - to additional courses
  - to rehabilitation
  - to professional interventions
  - to teaching at home or in hospital, etc.
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- the Law promotes collaboration among all participants of the educational process (including parents), as well as collaboration among schools and local medical and social institutions



Are teachers and schools ready for diversity which inclusion carries with it?



Or, do we just put different children in the same circumstances, expecting that they all successfully learn the same content in the same way and in the same time?

## The project

- Evidence based early educational interventions
- IPA project, co-financed by EU (Investment for the future)
- NGO Forum for freedom in Education
- October 2013 – February 2015
- 6 Croatian schools (Vukovar, Vinkovci, Osijek, Koprivnica, Gvozd, Cernik)





## Description of the Project

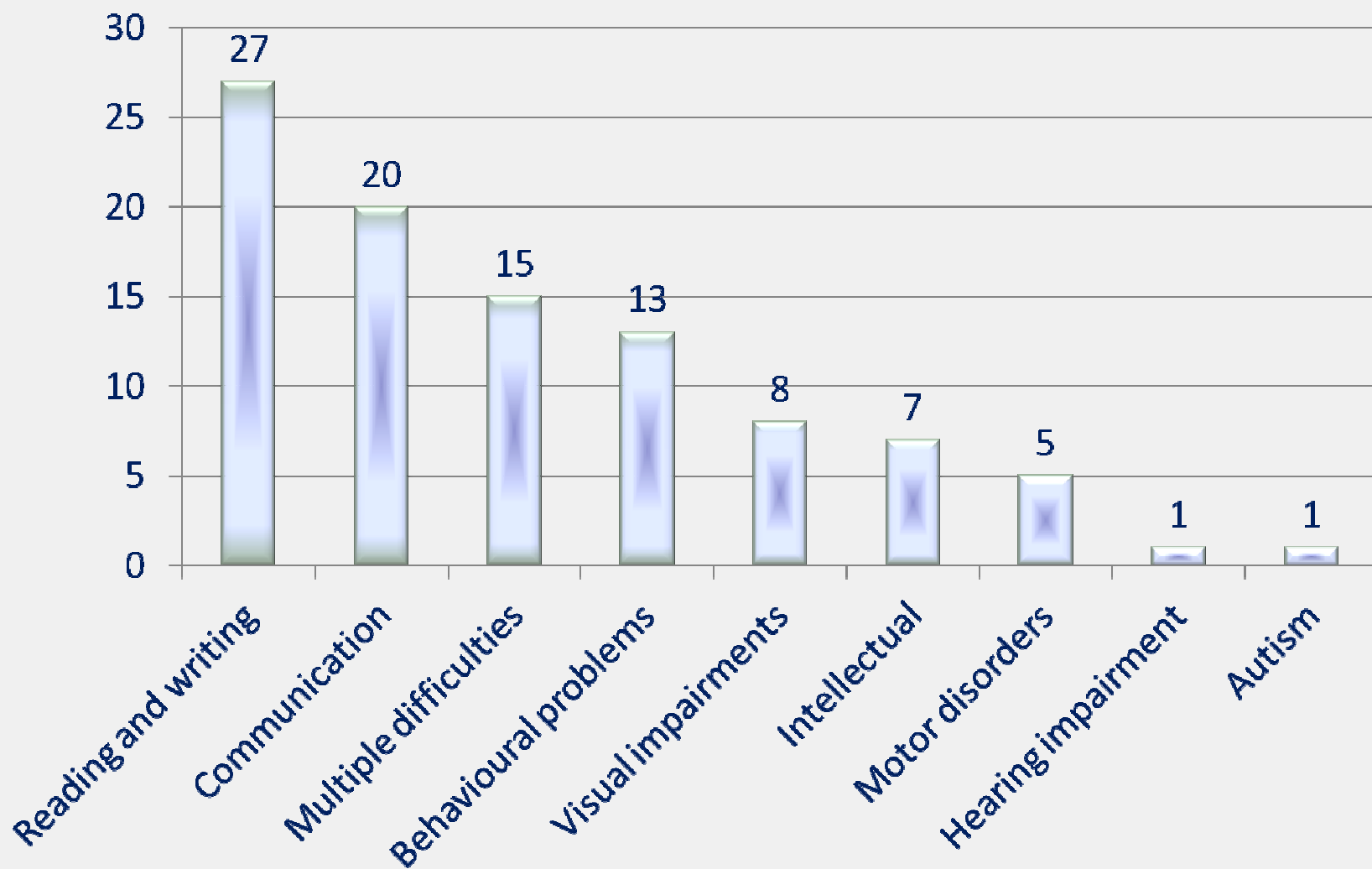
- **Aim:** development of Early Educational Interventions (EEI) that should provide equal educational opportunities for students with different kind of difficulties through the development of Evidence Based Practice model of EEI, which will be applicable within Croatian primary education system
- **Target groups** - students from 1<sup>st</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school
- **Principles of intervention:**
  - prompt and implemented during early manifestation of educational problems, in regular schools
  - students' parents are involved, multidisciplinary approach
- **EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTION**
- a clear structure, professionally guided, supervised and evaluated

## Project's activities:

- epistemological research and analysis of students with difficulties
- guided School Self-Evaluation process (SWOT analysis) addressing needs of those students
- development, implementation and evaluation of intervention in each school
- EPISTEMOLOGICAL RESEARCH
- the Questionnaire for teachers and the Questionnaire for students (922 students)
- 97 students with developmental disabilities and their 97 standard developed peers (equalized by gender, age and school they attend) are selected from the sample for the purpose of this analysis

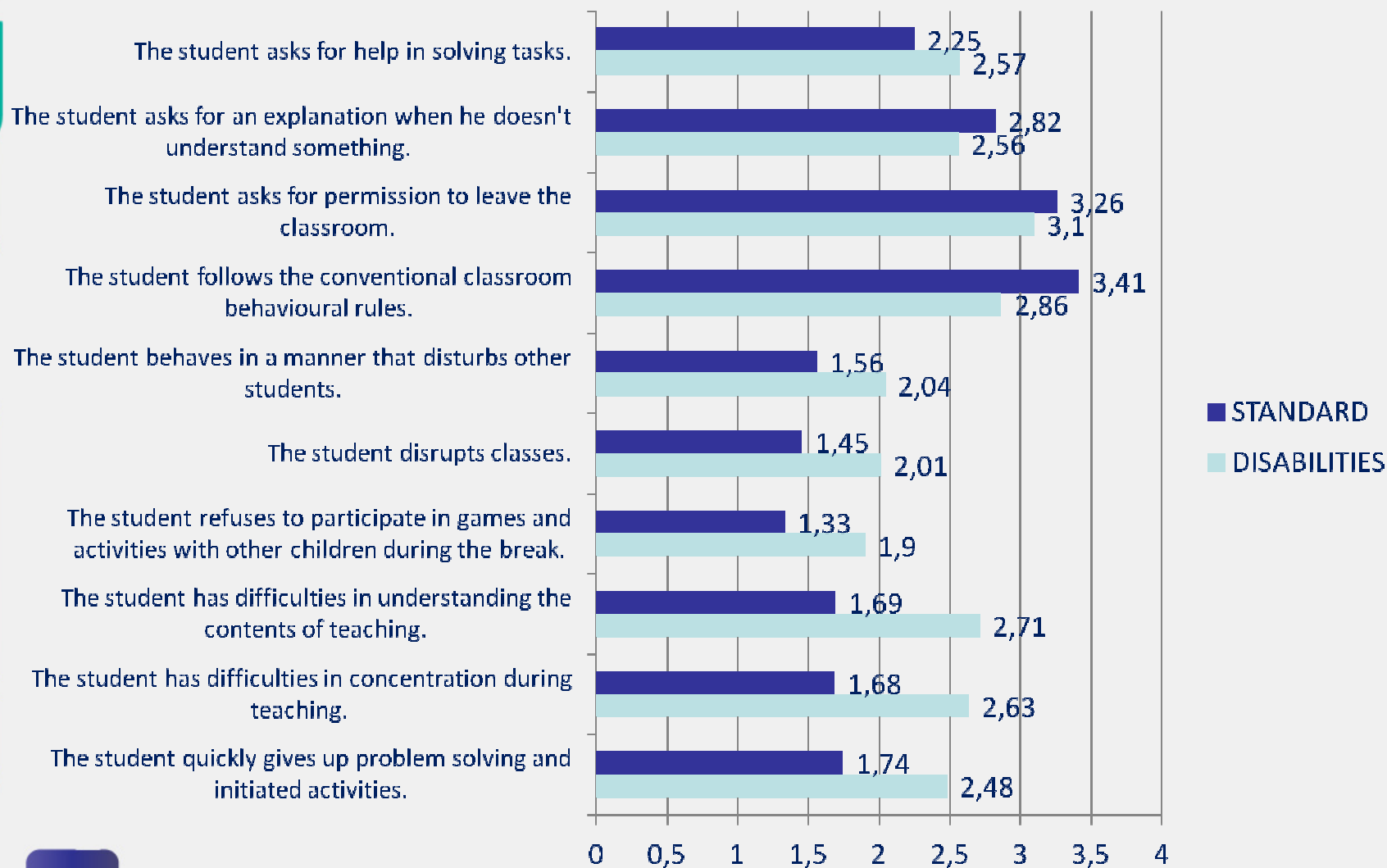
## The research

- the main goal of the research is to analyse the differences in the perceived inclusive dimension of the quality of educational process, from the perspective of teachers as well as from the perspective of students, in six mainstream Croatian primary schools
- the research starts from the assumption that difficulties experienced by students with disabilities in the educational setting result from the ways in which schools are currently organised, and from the lack of support which is provided to them
- the hypothesis - the students with disabilities have significantly more educational and socialisation problems than standard developed students, which leads to lower level of socialization and academic success of students with disabilities
- 10 variables about assessment and self-assessment of same components of students' behaviour were used in this analysis , which are a part of both questionnaires and which represent some indicators of the quality of the educational process

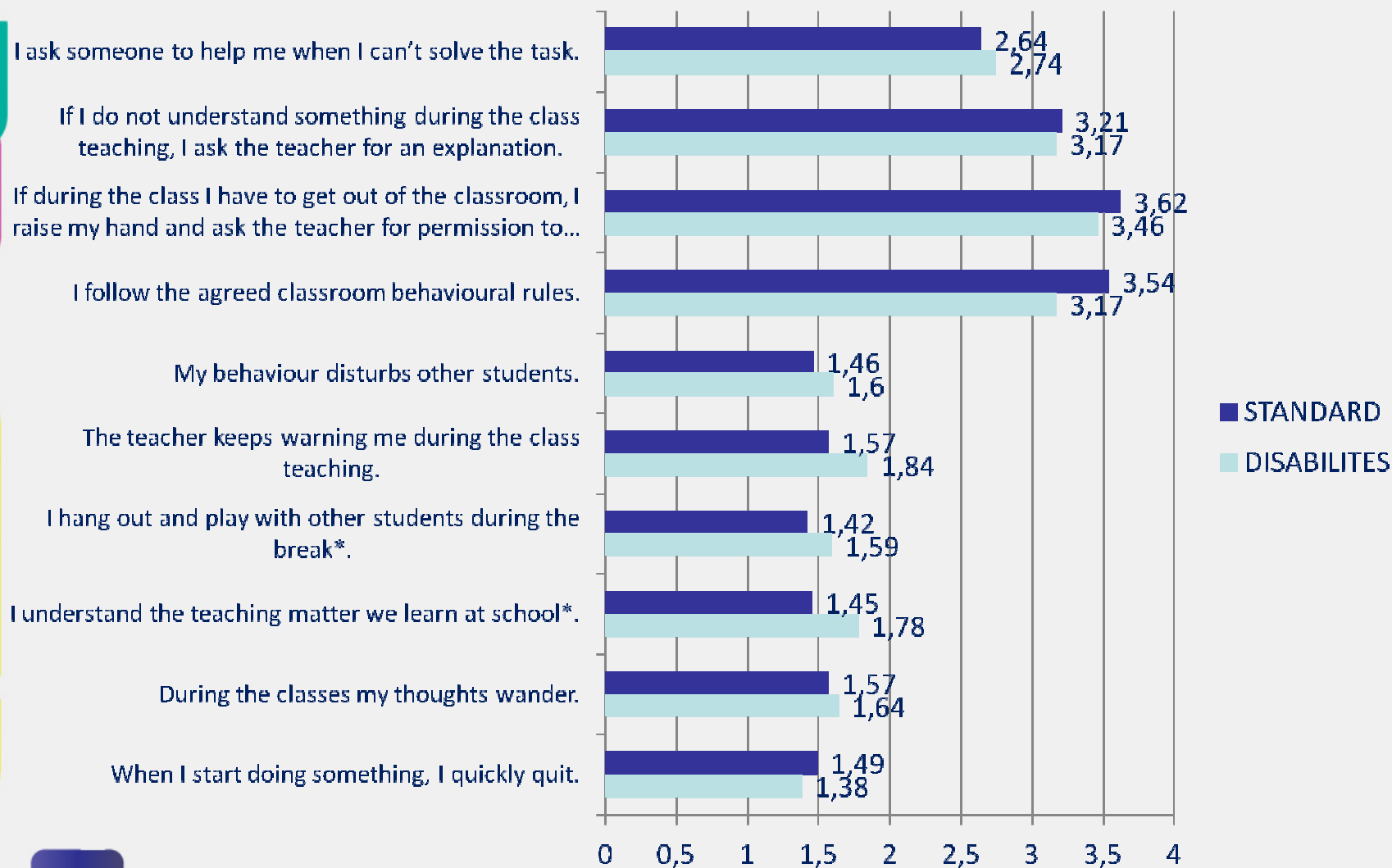


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# Teachers' assessment of students' behaviour according to disabilities (means)



# Students' self- assessment of students' behaviour according to disabilities (means)



## Conclusions

- **teachers** tend to evaluate students with disabilities as students who do not reach expected standards or follow expected norms
- students with disabilities are thus usually faced with lower expectations for their learning and development
- these students are inappropriately treated and find their learning potential miscalculated, what has consequences in their behaviour and learning achievement
- **students** with disabilities tend to evaluate themselves as every other student, having in mind that their needs are the same as the needs of others, and that they do the best they can in environment that is not always inclined to them
- **Croatian educational system is faced with two contrasting situations:**
  - current policy documents tend to favour inclusive education that respects all children's diversity;
  - we continue to witness a wide experience of school exclusion, as reflected in the teachers' assessment of students' behaviour



THANK  
YOU!

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Comments or  
questions?