

Beyond the Handicaps: An Ethnographic Analysis of School and Social Lives of Inclusive Students*

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Abstract: This study aims to identify inclusive students' problems in the school and classroom culture and determine the appropriate activities and shortcomings in inclusive practices. One of the qualitative research methods, Ethnography is employed as research design. Therefore, detailed observation is utilized to observe 4 students with special needs having features of their equivalent disability group. Besides, field notes and interviews are used to support data. Obtained data are analyzed through content analysis. Concordantly, themes and sub-themes are categorized. Results of the analysis reveal following findings: Students with special needs take pleasure in sharing the same environment with 'normal'-progress students thus; they leap forward to socialization. Equally important, appropriate activity and practice choice of the classroom teachers facilitate inclusive students' willingness. Additionally, inclusive education serves its purpose when the parents, school administrators and the involved teachers duly perform their duties collaboratively. Main problems encountered in inclusive education entail peer acceptance and improper practices in class activities. Another conclusion drawn from the study is that inclusive education teachers fail to perform practices effectively. Accordingly, it can be recommended that in-service training programs for inclusive education teachers are to be structured as part of their professional development.

Keywords: Primary School education, special education, inclusive education, ethnographic study, qualitative research.

Engellerin Ötesinde: Kaynaştırma Öğrencilerinin Okul ve Sosyal Yaşamlarının Etnografik Analizi

Öz: Bu araştırmanın amacı; kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin okul ve sınıf kültüründeki sorunlarının tespiti, kaynaştırma uygulamalarındaki görülen eksikliklerinin ortaya çıkarılması ve uygun etkinliklerin belirlenmesidir. Araştırmanın desenini; nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden Gözleme Dayalı Kültür Analizi (Etnografya / Ethnography) oluşturmaktadır. Bu amaçla, kendi özür gruplarının özelliklerini taşıyan 4 (dört) özel gereksinimli öğrenci, nitel veri toplama tekniklerinden ayrıntılı gözlemler ile izlenmiş, saha notları tutulmuş ve elde edilen veriler öğretmenleri ile yapılan görüşmeler ile desteklenmiştir. Veriler, içerik analizleri yapılarak incelenmiştir. Analizler sonucunda, tema ve alt temalar bulunmuştur. Analizlerden şu sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır: Özel gereksinimli öğrencilerin, kaynaştırma uygulamasında 'normal' öğrenciler ile aynı ortamda bulunmaktan keyif aldıkları ve sosyalleşme açısından büyük aşama kaydettikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Sınıf öğretmenlerinin, uygun etkinlik ve uygulama seçimleri, kaynaştırma öğrencilerinin Sosyal ortamlarda daha istekli olmasını sağlamıştır. Aile, öğretmen ve okul yönetimleri görevlerini eksiksiz yaptığında kaynaştırma eğitimi başarıya ulaşmaktadır. Kaynaştırma eğitiminde yaşanan en büyük problemler; akran kabulü ve ders etkinliklerinde yapılan yanlış uygulamalardır. Kaynaştırma öğretmenlerin, uygulamalarda yetersiz kaldığı görülmüştür. Öğretmenlerin, kaynaştırma eğitimi konusunda bilgilendirilmesi ve hizmetiçi eğitim almaları gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İlköğretim sınıf öğretmenliği, özel eğitim, kaynaştırma eğitimi, etnografik çalışma, nitel araştırma

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Human; according to Ertürk (1991); “is a bio-cultural and social being” (p.3). It is an organism who tries to comply with its environment, has necessities for living and needs to have knowledge to satisfy these needs. Culture can be defined as the link and relationship that the people establish with the facilities and the events occur around them. Moving discussion forward, Ertürk (1991) articulates that; “As an individual, human acquires some knowledge and experience interacting with social, physical and cultural environment. Thereupon s/he shares what is acquired with the other individuals” (p.4). Every human being is born with many skills and needs. Throughout their lives, people go through the process of development so as to meet their needs and improve their skills. With its broadest sense, education is the term that entails these whole processes (Kaya, 2007).

In our education system, numerous children are unable to pursue their education in a way that can be referred as ‘normal’. Some of our students have developmental characteristics that differ from their peers. This difference sometimes makes their educational life more challenging. In these cases, special educational needs of those individuals emerge. Students with special needs are offered special education services apart from formal education. Scientists have identified special education briefly as follows: “Special education entails well-trained teachers on the education of the students with special needs, well-prepared programs and applications arranged in accordance with physical disabilities of those children” (Eripek et al., 1997, p.7). Unlike the education process of the ‘normal’-progress children, some special arrangements are to be structured in the education of students with special needs. All these arrangements are identified as ‘special education’ (Eripek Ed., 2009, p.9). Special Education Services Legislation published in Official Gazette dated 31.05.2006 in the issue of 26184 with the definition of “special education’ in the statutory decree no. 573 as follows:

Special education refers to the education carried out on the basis of curriculum and methods, developed in accordance with the all developmental characteristics and academic competences of the students with special needs under the guidance of well-trained staff in order to meet social and educational needs of these individuals” (<http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/>).

The presence of individuals with special needs dates back to old times in history. However, their education has become an issue currently. This education demand has gone through several phases. The starting point of this education results from attitudes of those ‘normal’-progress students towards their peers with special needs (Eripek et al., 1997, p.11). Considering the special education until 1900s, Sucuoğlu and Kargın (2006); draws the attention to the fact that there hasn’t been any shared study on education of disabled individuals until the end of 16th century except from some exceptions. They articulate that in 1760 The National Institution for Deaf-Mutes is established first. Systematic studies on the education of individuals with special needs started almost at the end of the 1700s; however, within the last century, “education concept” and “educational models” dependently have changed and improved. Especially, early childhood education, training parents, inclusive practices and individualized education program are focused on (Cavkaytar et. al., 2006, p.16). As uttered by Diken, H.İ. and Cavkaytar, A. (2006); different boarding schools and institutions were established in 1800s in the USA. Special classes had been opened within schools having formal education at the end of the 19th century. Giving importance to the special education has occurred at the end of the 1900s in the world, then again it becomes of an issue in our country only in recent times.

General Directorate of Special Education and Counseling Services connected to Ministry of National Education explains the development of special education by this means: In our country the education of individuals with special needs started in Istanbul School of Commerce in 1889 with the training of hearing-impaired students” (Diken, H.İ. and Cavkaytar, A. 2006, p.18). According to Sucuoğlu and Kargın (2010), in the last century, the most important development about special education in our country is the statutory decree approved in 1997 with the number 573. With this decree, the most wide-ranging regulations are made on the basis of legislation enacted for the children

with special needs. By this decree, a series of principles and procedures are indicated including the identification of the students in special needs, their educations and assessments. "Special Education Services Legislation" which has been come into force in 2000 explains the service principles as a process of identifying, placement and assessment of the children in special need (Sucuoğlu and Kargin 2010, p.48).

Statutory decree numbered 573 on special education defines the children with special need as: "individuals who are noticeably different from their peers in view of personal capacity and educational status for varied reasons (MoNE, 1997). In Special Education Services Legislation, (2006) educational environments of individuals with special needs are listed as follows; Formal Education Classes (Inclusive Education-based), Special Education Classes, Institutions and schools providing special education and finally special education offered at home, namely, home schools. Considering the legislations, in inclusive practices, the students with special needs are supposed to continue their education in formal educational environments. A set of regulations are made for these children. These regulations should be given through supportive education and in-class activities (Eripek Ed., 2009, p.16).

Definition of "inclusion" and "inclusive education" in field of special education emerges in the several relevant studies. Inclusion as one of the most frequently used definition in the field of special education entails the case that students with special needs share the same environment with their peers in '*normal*'-progress, thus; they leap to socialization by means of the education they receive together with them. Building on this definition, some researchers in this field coin different definitions for inclusion as well. In that vein, regarding inclusion, the first thing that spring to mind is ensuring compliance between the individuals with special needs and their '*normal*'-progress peers. By this means, students with special needs take the opportunity to receive education with their friends without discriminated from their peers (Nagy, H. et al., 2006). Special Education Services Legislation published in Official Gazette dated 31.05.2006 in the issue of 26184 with the definition of inclusive education in the statutory decree no. 573 as follows:

Inclusion entails the learning environments arranged and developed to provide interaction between students with special needs and their '*normal*'-progress peers, in tandem realize the objectives of the education effectively " (<http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/>).

"Inclusion" is defined as formal educational opportunities provided to the students with special needs including additional facilities to their peers and teachers (Çolak, 2009). Another definition is made by Sucuoğlu and Kargin (2010) as: "With its simplest definition, inclusive education can be described as rendering the equivalent educational opportunities to those students with special needs in the same schools and classes together with their peers." Inclusion, in a different sense, is listed as follows: "Children with special needs, (1) should pursue their education in the same schools with their siblings and peers, (2) need to share the same learning environment together with their peers, (3) necessary special education needs of the teachers and students are to be met" (York and Tundidor, 1995).

In view of inclusive practices, in 1950 in the USA, the parents of children attending special schools agreed that when the opportunity was given to the students, they could learn and this chance should be provided to them. Therewithal, the parents indicated that these students should take advantage of the educational opportunities in formal classrooms with their peers (Batu, Kırcaali İftar, 2005, p.11). Bilen, (cited in Wood, 2007) proposes that it would be misconception to enunciate that initial inclusion was applied in education consciously. Generally, they appeared in the form of sub-classes incorporated in the state school's structure. To exemplify: in 1869 in the USA, special classes were organized for the hearing-impaired students within the structure of state schools. Besides, in 1896 in the USA, students with intellectual disabilities were provided with special classes in the state school's

structure. Along the same line, in 1899 in the education system of the USA, special classes were structured for the visually-impaired students in the stat schools. In brief; it can be argued that inclusive education emerged in the beginning of the 1700s in Europe and took place in the USA towards the end of 1800s. As a result of cases and sanctions about inclusive education after 1970, it started to take place in the laws of many countries based on the critics and suggestions on the related issue. In 1971 Italy, in 1976 Norway, in 1974 Great Britain and in 1975 France and the USA confirmed in their laws enacted to support inclusive education that provides equal education standards for the students with special needs.

In his study Nizamoglu (2006) claims that legislative regulations on inclusive education in Turkey refer to the ones in England and the USA. When special education applications become a current issue in our country, it is eye-catching that “inclusive education” is the most frequently expressed factor. Inclusion as practice, Public Law (PL) 94-142) “Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)” was enacted by the USA in 1975 and was rapidly implemented across other countries. In our country, inclusion is put into action by “Education Law of Children with Special Education” no.2916 in 1983 (Batu, Kırcaali İftar, 2005, p.15).

Inclusion is based on the philosophy that provides equal access to education for the students with special needs, creates a heterogeneous ability grouping that equilibrates the educational experience of disabled students to those of non-disabled students as much as possible”. Students with special needs experience life and friendship interacting with their ‘normal’-progress peers. Concomitantly, they acquire new attainments through observing their peers. To be part of the society they live in, they get real life experiences in this way (Sucuoğlu and Kargın 2010, p.61). It is accepted that one of the best way to learn something is to teach it. Therefore, it is concluded that peer education tended to be concerned as helpful both for the students with special needs and the students with ‘normal’-progress. Peer education refers to transferring knowledge to the peers in-class or out-of-class under the guidance of teachers (Güteryüz, 2009). Inclusion sometimes may result in awkward experiences for those students with special needs who are not approved by their peers. Henceforth, it is of vital importance to create a classrooms atmosphere shared equally by both group in order to eliminate discrimination and provide accommodations for all students at a disadvantage (Uzun 2009).

The environments where the students with special needs can receive education are listed in the statutory decree no. 573 from least restrictive environments to most restrictive ones: “Full inclusion, resource room-based inclusion, regular inclusion, tailored special classes, Day care special education schools, Special education boarding schools.”

In order to carry out a congruent and qualified inclusion in education, a set of factors are to be combined properly. To achieve the highest efficiency in inclusion; ‘normal’-progress students, teachers, parents and physical structures should be arranged in compliance with the disabled students (Güteryüz, 2009). Basic elements pathway to success in inclusion are as follows: ‘Normal’-progress students, involved teachers, school administrators, parents, physical structures, individualized education programs, supportive education services and additional services.

As indicated by Sucuoğlu and Kargın (2010), attempts to create opportunity to enable disabled and non-disabled students learn together have gradually increased recently. Nevertheless, obstacles caused by several reasons impede desired student improvements to be attained. On the basis of the relevant literature on inclusive education, the obstacles are revealed as: “negative attitudes of teachers, uneducated staff and lack of supportive services, misconception that special education and formal education services differ from each other, ineligible physical structures” (p.54). Ertunç (2008) supports the notion that inclusive education not only includes guidance counselor and classroom teachers but in-field teachers as well. The role of school administrators should not be underestimated in inclusive

education. On-site implementation of the inclusion will be easier for all the stakeholders once the school administrators believe in the necessity and importance of inclusive practices (Güteryüz, 2009).

Compared to other fields of education, the number of the studies conducted on inclusive education in our country remains unsatisfactory. Building on this argument, it is believed that this drawback may cause restriction in the dissemination of inclusive education practices and decrease in its qualification. Herewith, social and cultural environments of the inclusive students are examined in the present study in order to remedy this deficiency.

Aim of the Research

In this study it is aimed to observe 4 students with special needs in their social and school culture while interacting with their peers, scrutinize the conditions in this field, and identify the required standards for the inclusion in primary education. This study attempts to offer solutions for an effective inclusive education through qualitative design based on observations and interviews. In line with this aim, following questions are formulated:

1. What does it mean to be an inclusive student?
2. What are the effects of school and classroom cultures on the inclusive students?
3. What are the main problems in inclusion faced by students with special needs?
4. What are the factors affecting the success of inclusive students?
5. What are the responsibilities for teachers, parents and social circle in inclusive education?
6. Which studies and applications should be carried out for a qualified inclusion in our schools and classrooms?

Method

In this study “Qualitative research” methods are applied. Qualitative research can be defined as “studies in which qualitative processes are followed with a focal point to raise the chain of perceptions and events to the surface as they are, through such qualitative data collection instruments as interviews, observations and document review” (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2008, p.38). Qualitative research paradigm is defined as conducting in-depth research, elucidating events and interpreting the meanings. Such related terminologies as qualitative, ethnographic, phenomenological, structuralist, interpretive approach are among the ones cited mostly in the relevant methods and theories (Ericson, 1986; cited in: Dale 2009, p.9). This study is designed as ethnographic research. Ethnography is a qualitative research method often employed for collecting empirical data on cultures. Fetterman, (1998, p.1) defines Ethnography as “the art and science of describing a group or culture. The description may be of a small tribal group in an exotic land or a classroom in middle-class suburbia.” Ethnographic research method is widely used in education to explore and analyze the educational problems of a particular group such as school administrators, teachers, students with special needs, disadvantaged communities, etc. In ethnography studies, analysis process is generally conducted through such obtained qualitative data instruments as “observation, interview and metaphors”. Participant observer or non-participant observer can perform the observations. However, the participant observer should develop self-awareness about how his/her presence affects the natural environment henceforth; culture and should attempt to minimize this observer effect (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2008, p.71).

Participants

Rather than entailing the entire population, including the specific people, events and phenomena representing the population is a constructive solution in any study (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2008, p.101). In this study, one of the “purposeful sampling models” maximum variations sampling method” is used to form the sample. Referring to the definition by Patton (1987), creating small sample groups with maximum varieties has at least two benefits: “(1) explaining each event included in the sample in detail in its own context, (2) uncovering the themes and values emerge in different features of the cases” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p.109). In compliance with “maximum variations sampling model”; four different disability groups are specified. With this in mind, 4 students with special needs having features of their equivalent disability group are included in this study. Those are; (Samet) with autistic disorder, physically impaired (Furkan), (Azra) with mild intellectual disability, and (Emirhan) with learning disability. Besides, interview protocol is carried out with the involved teachers (Kadriye Dolaman, Aynur Demir, Rasim Kılıç, and Mehmet Çalışır) in order to support the obtained data.

Data Collection Tools

In data collection, observations are utilized to examine such complicated relationships (doctor-nurse, student-teacher, and doctor-patient) along with determining existence versus absence (to collect numeric data as the number of tables and desks) (Karasar 2009, p.157). Karasar propounds that (2009); there are 2 basic observation techniques depending on the physical intimacy and relationship between the observer and the ones observed. These are: “1. external observation, 2. internal observation”. This study is carried out through “internal observation”. Internal (participant) observation in which the participant spends time with the ones observed and pretends to be a part of that group is mostly applied by the anthropologists (p.158). In the relevant terminology, this technique is coined as “qualitative research method” or “ethnographic research method” (Wilson, 1982; Cit: Karasar, 2009, p.158). Depending on the continuity, two types of observations emerge as event sampling and time sampling. 1. Continuous observation and 2. Intermittent observation (Kerlinger 1966; Cit: Karasar 2009, p.158). This study is conducted through intermittent observation. The researcher observed the students and took field notes on Mondays for 10 weeks starting from the 3rd week of the December (20.12.2010) till the second week of March (14.03.2011) in specific timetables. Another frequently used method in qualitative research is the interviews. Interview protocol is applied as a supportive data to unveil the respondents’ viewpoints, experiences, feelings and perceptions on the events (Bogdan & Biklen 1992; Cit: Yıldırım & Şimşek 2008, p.40). After observations, to support the data an 8-item “standardized open-ended interview protocol” with involved teachers in the classroom culture and field notes are employed. Thereby, consistency of this study is ensured.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, ethnographic analysis is conducted through “descriptive or content analysis” methods. By means of content analysis, data are included in the analysis process in detail. To this end, emergent themes and categories are formed (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p.223). Concordantly, in this study the researcher analyzed the data using content analysis.

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008); analyze the obtained qualitative data in 4 phases:

Coding Data. In Table 1 below, as a result of the student observation report analysis obtained from the school and classroom culture, the emergent codes are listed as follows. While forming the codes, the researcher attempts to address the most frequently repeated events that are important in the inclusive education. Concomitantly, codes are the fundamental elements shaping the categories of this study.

Table 1
Codes of Student Observation Report

Emirhan	Shyness, introversion, peer acceptance and adaptation, difficulty of problem solving, peer dialogues, willingness to play games, fail to follow the courses, sense of achievement in the activities, need for guidance, classroom order, teacher attitudes and competencies, supportive education practices.
Azra	Difficulty in establishing dialogue, Boredom, teacher support, peer jealousy, fail to follow the courses, cooperation, willingness to play games, parental support, benefits of supportive education, peer acceptance, classroom culture and facilities, assertion.
Furkan	Teacher attitudes, appropriate activity choice, academic achievement, lack of self-confidence, compatible peer relationships, peer dialogues, need for physiotherapy, motivation and willingness, need for playing games and acting, misbehaviors, in-class events, health status.
Samet	Compliance problems with peers, physical infrastructure deficiencies of the classrooms and schools, challenge to comply with 'normal'-progress students, Unwillingness, concentration problems in the courses, time limitations of the teachers, overpopulation problems, taking peers and other students as a model, effective in-class activities.

Along the similar line, Table 2 below introduces the codes obtained from the analysis of the student-classroom teacher interview results. Codes are formed on the basis of the common issues iteratively uttered by the teachers.

Table 2
Teacher Interview Codes

Kadriye Dolaman	Inclusive education and identifying the students, physical infrastructure deficiencies of the classrooms and schools, in-service training, student accommodation and peer acceptance, activity preferences, expectations from those concerned.
Aynur Demir	Definition of inclusive education, challenges in inclusive education practices, intensive weekly schedule, definition of 'normal'-progress, acceptance of inclusive students, attempts to develop socialization, request for teacher information sessions.
Rasim Kılıç	Shared educational environment, professional seniority, peer and teacher compliance, time limitations, providing sense of belonging to the students with special needs, equality, allocating responsibility, parent cooperation, and openness to cooperation.
Mehmet Çalışır	Overpopulation, improper practices, concentration problems, need for parental support, being able to take responsibility, peer support, cooperation, and request for in-service training.

Identifying the Themes. Encoding and classification is not sufficient enough to interpretation of the qualitative data. Based on the code sets, specific themes grouping under a certain category are needed. Codes obtained from the analysis of student observation and teacher interview results are grouped under the 3 themes and presented in the following Table 3 below:

Table 3
Themes

1. Being Inclusive Student
2. Inclusive Education Practices
3. Elements of Qualified Inclusive Education

Editing Codes and Themes. Thematically encoding step is followed by editing the codes and themes in accordance with the emergent codes and themes generated from the data. The researcher edits the themes according to the obtained data as a total of three themes each of which includes 2 sub-themes. The following Table 4 below demonstrates the themes and sub-themes:

Table 4*Themes and Sub-themes*

Being Inclusive Student
Characteristics of the Inclusive Students and Normal-Progress Students and Adaptation Process
Effects of the Inclusive Education Environment on the Students with Special Needs
Inclusive Education Practices
Social and Cultural Experiences Encountered by the Inclusive Students
Factors Affecting the Success of Inclusive Education
Elements of Qualified Inclusive Education
Responsibilities of All Stakeholders in the Milieu for Effective Inclusive Education
Activities Facilitating the Efficacy of Inclusive Education

Identifying and Interpreting the Findings. In the last phase, findings obtained from the data are interpreted in the detail. Besides, the researcher attempts to obtain some other results. In the qualitative research, researcher views are of crucial importance in that s/he is intertwined with the data closely.

Findings

Being Inclusive Students

Mehmet Çalışır, teacher of the focus-group student Samet, identifies the inclusive student as an individual who spends time with friends, becomes socialized and receives education in the class. He continued his speech as follows: *"Thanks to the developing technology, parents can explore the problems of their children and identify them easily. Henceforth, RAM (Counseling Research Centers), counseling teachers and rehabilitation centers are applied..."* (Interview, Mehmet Çalışır, 5, 21.03.2011).

Another definition by the teacher of focus-group student Furkan is:

"Inclusive student is the one who are in physical or intellectual developmental delay compared to those of with normal-progress; inclusive education proves opportunity for these learners to have education together with their non-disabled peers. Inclusive student Furkan is within the physically-impaired group. However, we never discriminate him among his friends as he is an inclusive student" (Interview, Rasim Kılıç, 5, 21.03.2011).

Inclusive students exhibit different developmental and behavioral characteristics from those of 'normal'-progress learners. Besides, they are eager to spend times with their peers. Observations support this case as follows:

"When I entered the schoolyard, I met Azra and her parents. I learnt that Azra didn't want to come to school that morning as she felt sick yet, she told her mother that she felt bored at home and wanted to go to school. As she insisted on, her mother got her to the school even though one hour left for the lunch time. "In fact, I would get her to the school after lunch however; I was surprised that she insistently wanted to go to school. She generally doesn't want to study lesson and go to school". What makes me happy is that the reason why she wants to come to school. She is here as she wants to be in the classroom with her friends. She is the only child at home and she loves playing games. Nevertheless, these reasons wouldn't prompt her to go to school" (Observation, Azra, 1, 10.01.2011).

"As soon as the bell rang, the students went outside for a break. Samet didn't understand what was going on. He asked İsmail: "Won't we study more? Won't I read?" Samet couldn't understand that the lesson was over. İsmail told Samet: "Samet, my friend, the lesson is over". Then, Samet sat down and started to draw on the paper in front of him" (Observation, Samet, 1-3, 24.01.2011).

As is evident from the observations and interviews, inclusive students have distinctive features and behavioral structures.

Characteristics of the Inclusive Students and Normal-Progress Students and Adaptation Process

"I think a 'normal' student is the one who isn't mentally handicapped and goes through normal developmental process. Actually the definition of the term "normal" varies from person to person. To me, my students can be called as "normal". Yet, you observe this class. In this regard, you may label them as naughty or ill-mannered or else smart and gifted. That's all I can say" (Interview, Kadriye Dolaman, 6, 21.03.2011).

Sometimes jealousy and adaptation problems may occur in the adaptation process of the inclusive students and their peers labeled as '*normal*'-progress individual; so-called: normal". Observations support this case as follows:

"While I was going along the corridor, I saw Emirhan playing football with a paper ball with his friends; Caner, Ahmet and the others that I don't know. They used the classroom door as goalpost. Emirhan called me 'Let's play together, teacher. You promised me'. I couldn't reject and joined the team. I askance checked the corridor whether there is a teacher or not and started to play football with the children. Despite no apparent group at all, Caner said to Emirhan: "You are strong. Let your teacher play for our team. Emirhan didn't accept. Caner said: "Let's not play then". After I heard it, I said on purpose that I was tired and I wanted to be the referee. After a few minutes, the lesson bell rang. We entered the classroom" (Observation, Emirhan, 1, 17.01.2011).

Cem, who was sitting right behind me couldn't see the board because of me and was jealous of Furkan as I didn't sit nearby him. Thus, he turned to Rasim teacher and said: "*Teacher! Furkan's teacher both talks too much like Furkan and interrupts the lesson*" This caused a short chuckle in the classroom (Observation, Furkan, 2, 03.01.2011).

Azra's teacher; "My inclusive student Azra, plays games with her friends and spends time with them. As I said before, even if she has language inadequacy and difficulty in comprehending what she reads, it doesn't show that she has an antisocial personality. Therefore, I find her social aspects as well-developed" (Interview, Aynur Demir, 6, 21.03.2011).

This is an indicator of the desire to peer adaptation and willingness to time with their non-disabled peers.

Effects of the Inclusive Education Environment on the Students with Special Needs

The children were loudly counting "*one, two, three*" while playing hopscotch. I told: "*Azra, you are playing very well. How are you?*" She smiled and rushed into the classroom. One of her classmates said: "*Teacher, she doesn't talk to strangers. She always behaves like that*" (Observation, Azra, 1-2, 27.12.2010). As of the environment they receive education, inclusive students may behave timidly and have some difficulties in the adaptation process.

Emirhan's teacher: "We sometimes have difficulty in controlling Emirhan's anger. Sometimes he berserkly leaves away the class. When I get angry with him, he doesn't behave like that. When I try to behave nice and positive, he makes the most of this opportunity" (Interview, Rasim Kılıç, 6, 21.03.2011).

The effect of inclusive environment on students with special need is great. The events experienced in this climate can set a model for students with special needs. Again one day, as soon as I entered the schoolyard, I noticed Samet. He obviously was under the influence of a fight that he watched or saw

in a game as he was hitting whoever came nearby him with the pencil and saying: *"I beat you, too. You are not alive. I won."*

"Enes, who was sitting at the very back of the class, came to me. "What is your branch, my teacher?" I said: "I am a classroom teacher just like yours" He asked: "Are you Azra's teacher?" When I said: "Yes", he started to backbite Azra. He said: "I don't like her. She never talks. The teacher calls her to the chalkboard, she never answers. I get angry with her." I told him not to think like that. Azra fell behind the lessons and he should help her. He told me: "OK, then" and went back to his seat (Observation, Azra, 1-2, 03.01.2011).

"Emirhan was continuing solving math examples written on the board at his desk. I said: "Hi, Emirhan. What are you doing?" He answered: "I couldn't keep up with; I'm writing the missing notes. I am about to finish it". His classmate Caner: "Teacher, he writes too slowly and he is always late, thus he cannot go outside in the break time". Emirhan glared at his friend and kept on writing" (Observation, Emirhan, 1-3, 03.01.2011).

Inclusive students are affected from their environments and they challenge to adapt. Inclusive students who are not supported by their teachers and peers feel desire to isolate themselves consequently, they have ineffective and unproductive learning.

Inclusive Education Practices

"Samet is my student who fulfills his responsibilities. He fulfills the tasks I give him as much as he understands. For this reason, I always tell his classmates: 'Use understandable words while speaking to Samet'. We overcome this challenge in this way.' Yet, sometimes he behaves stolid in the cases that he doesn't want to handle with. When I tell him that he should put the rubbish into the dustbin, he starts to speak about a different subject. When I tell him to finish his study, he asks: 'When will the lesson end? Has my mother come?' I think this case results from his attention deficit" (Interview, Mehmet Çalışır, 5-6, 21.03.2011).

Aynur Demir, teacher of our focus student Azra, explains some of the activities as follows:

"I give some responsibilities to my inclusive student Azra in order to improve her social aspects. She has responsibilities just like her classmates. I think, being an inclusive student does not mean being a special student. Inclusive student doesn't have to be different from the students that we define "normal". On the contrary, it requires hard work, dedication and being in compliance with them in order to accommodate themselves" (Interview, Aynur Demir, 7, 21.03.2011).

"The teacher Rasim Kılıç said that there was little time for the end of the lesson and told everyone to pour their dirty water into the washbasin and clean their desks in five minutes. When Furkan went to the washbasin, Ahmet told him: "Give it to me, let me pour the water and you clean my desk". Thus, they shared the tasks. Ahmet poured the water and Furkan cleaned the desk. When the bell rang at 2.30 p.m., the students hadn't finished tidying up yet. Some of the parents helped the students tidying themselves up" (Observation, Furkan, 1-2, 24.01.2011).

The important thing in inclusive practices is that the classroom teachers should manage the class well and take advantage of appropriate activities. A teacher who gives responsibilities among peers and make them cooperate will gain the inclusive student.

"Ms. Aysun, told her students to be quiet. They reviewed the banknotes and repeated their names. Azra could recognize 5 and 10 TL from now on. Asking for her other students to revise at home what they learnt in the class, the teacher asked Azra to relearn the names of the banknotes with her father at home" (Observation, Azra, 1- 2, 10.01.2011).

Social and Cultural Experiences Encountered by the Inclusive Students

The bell rang after a short train game with the students. I said: "Yes. We arrived to the last station. Now everybody turns back to their seats and gets ready for the lesson". Furkan replied me nicely. "Teacher, I will go to my seat after I wash my hands" He went to wash his hands. He came to the classroom 1 minute later after the teacher. I told his teacher that he washed his hands so he was late. His teacher said: "OK, then. Go to your seat, artist!" (Observation, Furkan, 1-2, 27.12.2010).

Aynur teacher entered the classroom. She greeted the students. She started the lesson by saying "Have a nice lesson". Most of the students replied "Thanks" but some of them said: "Welcome Teacher". Azra just stood up. She seemed unwilling to speak. She saw me as a stranger in the classroom so she couldn't control her behaviors. I felt that she was under pressure because she repeatedly turned and looked at me (Observation, Furkan, 2-3, 27.12.2010).

Teacher Aynur, as promised, got the expected answers and took Azra to the playground in the backyard of the school as a reward. There were two swings, one slide, one climbing wall and one sandpit in the playground. First of all, Azra went down the slide with her teacher. Then she expressed her willingness to swing by stating: "Please swing me my teacher". Azra was speaking so fluently at the time of playing. Actually it seems more appropriate to teach Azra through dramatizing and game-like activities. Here, the importance of the game emerges. At the end of the lesson, Azra's father picked her up. Aynur Teacher: "Today, Azra made me really happy. She completed all tasks I gave. I congratulate her, Sir" (Observation, Azra, 1-2, 07.03.2011).

Factors Affecting the Success of Inclusive Education

"Our classroom is quite big and spacious but if the population was a bit lower in number, I could have more chance of one-to-one training with each student including Azra" (Interview Aynur Demir, 5, 21.03.2011).

Teachers' attitude towards the inclusive students is of vital importance. Embracing them will increase the student's success and help to ensure adaptation. Observations support these cases:

Rasim teacher narrates the challenges he experienced in carrying out an effective inclusive education as follows:

"The only challenge I experience is that I have to prepare an extra lesson plans for my inclusive student Furkan. And it takes very long time to write them. I don't know which plans I should study; my plans or Furkan's plans. Both are my responsibility but the only difficulty for me in inclusive practices is preparing the plans" (Interview, Rasim Kılıç, 6, 21.03.2011).

"The course hours should be eligible in the classrooms in which the inclusive education is carried out. To me, the teacher should devote more time for inclusive student and now that it is being carried out, it should be up to the hilt. Families should be patient and know that it will take time to prove development. School administrators should enhance the classroom conditions and tailor the number of students. The most important thing is that school-family-teacher triangle should be formed well in order to strengthen the relationship between the teacher and the inclusive student (Interview, Mehmet Çalışır, 9, 21.03.2011).

Elements of Qualified Inclusive Education

One of the basic elements of qualified inclusive education is the teacher who does his/her job well and devotes time for the activities to facilitate student's learning. Observations support this as follows:

"Azra has difficulty in pronouncing the letters 'S' and 'R'. Knowing this, the teacher took the pre-prepared worksheets. She said to Azra: "Today, we are going to read these writings together with you. And she showed the first paper to Azra; 'As-sa, Es-si, us-su, is-si, üs-sü'. They pronounced the letter 'S' in this way where the letter 'S' is in the last letter of the first syllable and in the first letter of the second syllable. Azra pronounced the letter 'S' as the letter

‘Ş’. It seems that she can handle this case in the process of time. Then, they gave examples of ‘S’ from nature. The teacher imitates how the snake makes sound and asked Azra to say ‘tsssss’. After the practice with ‘S’ letter finished, they started to practice the letter ‘R’. The teacher said that the dog makes ‘hrrrrr’ sound when it gets angry; afterwards, the teacher wanted Azra to imitate this dog sound. Azra tried her best but she could only say ‘hıvvvv’ (Observation, Azra, 1-3, 21.02.2011).

“Regardless of our strong relationship with the families, I can’t help reproaching them. In fact, it will be a constructive reproach. Sometimes parents are overprotective towards their children. For this reason, we may encounter some challenges. Especially if the child has a handicap like Furkan, the family becomes extremely protective. Let the child become self-sufficient (Interview, Rasim Kılıç, 9, 21.03.2011).

Ms. Aynur articulates that she has participated in some in-service training programs organized by Provincial Directorate for National Education. She says that she doesn’t have a good grasp of this issue however; she claims that she has enough background knowledge about inclusive education.

Another involved teacher Mr. Rasim indicates, just like Mehmet teacher, he hasn’t participated in any in-service training on inclusive education before. Yet, he says that he has been a classroom teacher for years and he has many students with physical and intellectual disabilities. Therefore, he gets used to any challenge that emerges.

Responsibilities of All Stakeholders in the Milieu for Effective Inclusive Education

“At schools, students with ‘normal’-progress should be educated not to mock at the disabilities of their peers with special needs. In this regard, non-disabled children may be asked to devote time to their inclusive peers in break time and exhibit positive attitudes towards them” (Interview, Aynur Demir, 8, 21.03.2011).

Rasim teacher addresses the issue of inclusive education as:

“The school administrators have enough knowledge about inclusion. Furthermore, they know that inclusive education will be more effective in a comfortable classroom with little number of students. Our manager supports me on this point. There are 15 students in my class and I can easily take care of each of my students. Even, there are resource rooms in the school for the inclusive students with severe disabilities. We often share our opinions with the teacher of that class. It is beneficial for both of us” (Interview, Rasim Kılıç, 7, 21.03.2011).

Activities Facilitating the Efficacy of Inclusive Education

Avoiding generalization, Mehmet teacher prefers talking about his own inclusive student Samet, arguing that he spends most of his time with him thus; has an opportunity to develop enough awareness on his behaviors:

“Samet is a willing and diligent student with autism. He fulfills the tasks as best as he can. So, I try my best to practice socialization and adaptation activities with Samet as much as possible. I think Samet should have social life skills lesson instead of math or science and technology (Interview, Mehmet Çalışır, 5-6, 21.03.2011).

Kadriye teacher indicates that Emirhan had inclusive education in different environments: “He has lessons with school counseling teacher on certain days of the week. He focuses on the subjects that he is in special need in those times and tries to make up his deficiencies. In the other times, he spends time with me and his friends in the classroom. I get support from the counseling teacher when I can’t manage” (Interview, Kadriye Dolaman, 7, 21.03.2011).

“Ministry of National Education should improve the conditions of involved teachers in inclusive education so as to make inclusive practices attractive for them (Interview, Aynur Demir, 9, 21.03.2011).

"I can demand a larger classroom for inclusive education from the school administrators. To this end, I may have a chance to practice inclusive activities more comfortably" (Interview, Kadriye Dolaman, 7, 21.03.2011).

Lerzan teacher tries to teach the antonyms through game-based activities in order to ensure comprehension and provide enjoyable learning atmosphere. She said to Emirhan: "Now, I'm going to tell you a word and you'll reply me with its antonym. If you give the right answer, you gain the right to ask me a question, ok?" Emirhan liked this practice. They started in turn. Ms. Lerzan utters: "Then, I'm beginning. Hottttt". Emirhan replied: "Cold" and he smiled. Now it was Emirhan's turn. Ms. Lerzan pointed her finger to give Emirhan an example when Emirhan was thinking: "hmmmm". Pointing to the ceiling the teacher was trying to explain the word "High" by raising her hand. Emirhan said: "I found. High". The teacher congratulates him: "Well done handsome boy! Now, my answer is Low." The game went on like that for a few minutes. At the end of the game, the teacher asked Emirhan: "Now, let's write down the words we found together with you". Although Emirhan was reluctant, he then wrote down the words by the help of Ms. Lerzan and they finished the lesson together (Observation, Emirhan, 1-3, 21.02.2011).

"At first, if you ask me, an inclusive student should spend much time with his friends. I never discriminate my inclusive student from their 'normal'-progress peers. Samet sits with his non-disabled friends, eats his lunch together with them, plays games with them in playtime. These are what I can do as far as I know. However, there is absolutely more and will be (Interview, Mehmet Çalıřır, 9, 21.03.2011).

Discussion and Results

According to Landers (2002); people are social beings by nature. They interact with other people in every stage of life. Children improve their knowledge through social interaction with their social environment. In all cultures, healthy and 'normal'-progress children starting from an early age build relationship with their social circle. Considering the aforementioned benefits of social adaptation and social competence, Hartup (1978) fosters debate on the fact that socially immature children exhibit late maturation, tendency to violence and poor anger management. As soon as the education year starts, behavioral changes occur among children. This may stem from the reason that the children take their peers as model and behave in accordance with what they learn in the classroom environment. The foregoing discussion implies that being an inclusive student refers not only being together with non-disabled students but also means taking part in the same activities with them thus; being an individual sharing the same culture together with their 'normal'-progress peers. Thereupon, inclusive students are affected by the experiences in the school culture, taking their peers as model and are pleased to have education in their milieu. Mowder and Widerstrom (1989) provide ample support for the assertion that individuals with developmental disorder proved to exhibit self-improvement when they share the same environment with their peers and have opportunity to interact with them.

Overpopulation and physical structure in the inclusive classrooms impede the efficacy of inclusive education. Physical conditions of the buildings in which inclusive education is carried out are the critical elements pathway to effectiveness. These conditions entail the classroom and the materials used in the inclusive education. And all the property in the classroom is included. Adjusting the physical infrastructure has direct effects on the behaviors (Lewis and Doorlag, 1987; Cit: Çayır 2009).

In her study, Turhan (2007) propounds that 'normal'-progress students are averse to receive education together with the inclusive students. Accordingly, she supports the view that teaching inclusive students in a different learning environment will have positive effect on both sides. On the other hand, some students articulated that they are pleased to share the classroom with their inclusive

peers. In line with this, it can be suggested that inclusive education are to be well-defined to the 'normal'-progress individuals. In his study, Güleriyüz (2009) observes that a number of participant students take advantages of the classroom cooperation and non-disabled students have mild attitude towards the disabled students. Most of the school managers indicate that they conduct contact meeting for the students on the inclusive education for all those who are not at a disadvantage (Uzun 2009).

Cited from Darica, Güleriyüz (2009) portrays the issue that students labeled as 'normal' and the students with special needs affect one another in many directions correspondingly, they have opportunity to self-improvement in their developmental areas. In other words, students with special needs get benefit from each other by observing the 'normal'-progress students, taking them as a model, imitating, cooperating, sharing and interacting with them. Henceforth, special education becomes effective in inclusive education. Some of the main factors affecting the success of inclusive education are the classroom practices of the teachers, teaching techniques, their attitude towards inclusive students and the adaptation of the disabled students with the non-disabled ones. Based on the findings obtained from 'normal'-progress students, it would be fair to articulate that inclusive students do not pose a problem for the 'normal'-progress students in social aspects however; it is observed that they distract the concentration of the others in the course hours in the classroom (Kaya, 2007).

Regarding the inadequate social skills and competence of the disabled learners, it is of capital importance to identify their social problems so as to assist them to apply what they have learnt, to cope with the social problems and ensure the peer acceptance (Gresham, 1987). Moreover, social acceptance of these learners is of vital importance. Positive attitude and constructive approach of the social environment towards inclusive students affect the success of inclusive students positively.

Önder (2007) puts forward the claim that involved teachers do not have sufficient background knowledge on inclusive education; they do not make any pedagogical arrangements for the inclusive students, they do not take advantage of special education support services and even they have negative attitude towards inclusive education and inclusive students. Classroom teachers having inclusive students in their class only get help from counseling teachers and do not get any support from the external experts (Nizamoğlu 2006). School, parents, involved teachers and peer cooperation lie at the heart of the inclusive education. In the light of obtained findings, two main key elements have emerged; enjoyable learning environment shared by disabled and non-disabled students and the school administrators who provide opportunity to create this atmosphere. In Uzun's study (2009), results reveal that most of the interviewee school managers indicate that they conduct contact meeting for parents of both disabled and non-disabled students on the inclusive education.

As conclusion, *"School, parents, involved teachers and peer cooperation"* lie at the heart of the effective inclusive education. In this study it is concluded that positive attitudes of the 'normal'-progress students towards the students with special needs has positive effect on the efficacy of inclusive education. Additionally, it is apparent that inclusive education facilitates both academic and social achievement of the learners and serves its purpose when the parents, school administrators and the teachers duly perform their duties collaboratively. It is an urgent need to enhance the physical conditions wherein the inclusive education occurs. Inclusive students should be provided with a well-organized education including classrooms with large, under populated and favorable physical conditions. School administrators, parents, peers, staff and classroom teachers, in particular are to be equipped with a necessary knowledge on inclusive education. Especially, classroom teachers should be offered in-service training programs on different disability groups. Perception of the 'normal'-progress learners and their parents on inclusive education is of capital importance. Once the inclusive education is applied in the classroom, non-disabled students and their parents are the ones to be

informed about the issue providing confirmatory evidence that those non-disabled students are not burden but an opportunity for the classes they are welcomed in. Social environment in which both disabled and non-disabled students can share learning atmosphere together are to be structured in the classroom and school culture. There shouldn't be over 2 inclusive students for each classroom. The main responsibility of the school, peer, teacher, parents, administrator and the milieu is to ensure the achievement of the inclusive student. Parents should be in cooperation with teachers, peers, school administrators and the social environment should all embrace the inclusive student. Working conditions of the classroom teachers offering inclusive education should be improved. Additional course fee can be paid for the involved teachers or they can receive premium in certain periods of time. Students identified as 'normal' and 'students with special needs' highlighted with an apostrophe in the relevant literature should be examined for whom they are 'normal' and what are the criteria to label them as 'normal' and *students with special needs*.

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