

SHORT INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH ON LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL YEARS*

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Abstract

In accordance with the efforts of the education systems around the world, the Romanian one also strives to create and implement a set of projects that include a generous, comprehensive educational offer, in order to meet the growing and diverse educational needs of a population with increasing and diverse educational necessities. This is how inclusive or integrated pedagogy (education) appeared, as well as the pedagogy of gifted children (the pedagogy of elitism) or the educational alternatives (Waldorf, Montessori, Freinet, Step by Step). With all these efforts to meet the educational needs of a mosaic and constantly changing population, one category of individuals has not been researched and explored enough: it is the category of children with learning difficulties. Research on this category of children has been carried on mainly during the last four decades.

The present study aims to address the issue of learning difficulties at the level of primary education, from the perspective of an ameliorative type of research, which proposes a series of effective action methods to reduce the learning difficulties in the Romanian language registered by the students of some classes in the primary school years. These methods can obviously be extended and adapted to other classes and other school subjects.

Key words: *Learning difficulties; Improvement experimental project; Basic hypotheses for research; Decrease the learning difficulties.*

1. Introduction

The study of learning disabilities does not have a very long history. Officially, the problem of learning difficulties arose in the sixth decade of the last century, although, obviously, children (and not only children) with learning difficulties have always existed.

Contemporary pedagogy is trying to face the new demands and problems of the postmodern world, bringing new educational proposals and solutions, of which

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many remained in a simple project, experimental phase, others being already applied in educational practice, their effects being observed. In a world of eclecticism, diversity, holism, inter-, multi-, transculturalism and globalization, education seems to be in a moment of crisis, foretold, as a matter of fact, since 1968 by Phillips Coombs and still supported today by many scientists for different fields of the macrosocial (political crisis, regime crisis, rationalization, authority, economic crisis, etc.), but also by different psychopedagogues with regard to education (Frangopol, 2002, *apud* Mogonea, 2010).

Pedagogy is trying to respond to this crisis, in reply, by initiating some projects that include a generous, comprehensive educational offer, in order to be able to satisfy the growing and diverse needs of education. This is how inclusive or integrated pedagogy (education), the pedagogy of gifted children (the pedagogy of elitism) and the educational alternatives (Waldorf, Montessori, Freinet, Step by Step) appeared. In this context, we also include the category of children with learning difficulties, on whom research has been done especially during the last four decades, in order to identify, first of all, the causes that determine low school performance, which can lead to school failure and lack of success, poor socio-professional insertion, school dropout, mental, intellectual, affective, social, emotional immaturity, juvenile delinquency, socially undesirable behaviors.

2. What are learning disabilities?

The official pedagogical history of the children with learning difficulties begins in 1963 when a group of parents met at a hotel in Chicago, calling specialists from different fields (doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, pedagogues) to tell them the problems their children face, mostly boys, problems raised by school learning. Among these specialists, the most receptive to the parents' complaints was Samuel Kirk (1962), considered today to be the theoretician father of learning difficulties (the meeting took place on April 6th, 1963). From this historical moment on, learning difficulties have become the preferred topics for the approach of some specialists, although not until now, due to the complexity, the variety of the fields of manifestation and the symptomatological and etiological variety, of the multitude of unwanted consequences on an individual, social and school level, the reality covered by learning difficulties is not completely elucidated (Mogonea, 2010).

Initially, the phrase "*learning disabilities*" was used for learning difficulties, which in literal translation would mean "learning disabilities", a phrase that was preferred and used by numerous psychopedagogues, even later (Fodor, 1997). However, although the two phrases – "learning difficulties" and "learning disabilities" – seem to be synonymous, on closer inspection, it is a partial synonymy. Also, the phrases *learning disorder* and *learning disability* require interpretations from various perspectives, biological, medical, psychological, in order to identify the possible causes (Kormos, 2017). Things become more complicated when, in the specialized literature, these two phrases enter into the same relationship of partial synonymy with other terms or phrases: *learning disorders*, *learning deficiencies*, etc., not to mention the confusions that appear between the phrases mentioned above

and terms/ phrases belonging to special psychopedagogy, respectively the field of pedagogy dealing with children with SEN (Special Educational Needs).

Various authors (Vrășmaș, 2001; Ungureanu, 1998, etc.) make a distinction between terms that at the level of common sense seem to be synonymous: difficulty, deficiency, incapacity, inability, disability, dysfunction, ailment, disorder, underdevelopment, immaturity, handicap. Beyond the semantic proximity, there are significant differences between these terms.

Over time, children with learning difficulties have received different more or less relevant labels: children with difficulties in assimilating knowledge, educable mentally retarded, educationally disabled children, culturally disadvantaged children, children with brain damage, children who learn slowly, perceptual disabled children, brain-damaged children, children with hyperkinetic behavior syndrome, with minimal brain damage, minimal cerebral dysfunction, minimal neurological disorder, learning disorders and difficulties. As some authors believe (Fodor, 1997), it can be seen that these labels are given either depending on the cause that generated it, or depending on the effect of this cause on behavior.

According to DSM-5 (The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder), learning difficulties/disorders refer to "all deficits related to general academic skills and the particular areas of reading, mathematics, and written expression" (Bunch, 2016, p. 30).

The category of children with learning difficulties cannot be overlapped with that of children with special educational needs (children with SEN) which is the object of the study of inclusive or integrated pedagogy (education). An attempt to separate the two categories of children is quite difficult, because both categories of children present symptomatic manifestations and have an etiology that in many cases is very similar. Then, both categories of children require therapeutic-recuperative pedagogical programs that are often similar in structure, content, strategies and, above all, in terms of finalities. However, after the 1980s, the need to try to separate the two categories of children was felt, as it was known that as far as children with learning difficulties are concerned, they are not mentally retarded, nor do they even have a slight disability (possibly, they have a liminal intellect) and they do not present any sensory deficiencies. They appear as "*normal*" or "*quasi-normal*" (Ungureanu, 1998) and usually their problems are not taken into account until they enter school (possibly starting from kindergarten) and when they face the problems raised by learning, respectively of school-type learning.

From a pedagogical point of view, the problem of children with learning difficulties requires the application of some methods, some recuperative, therapeutic strategies to reduce, remove the causes provoking the learning difficulties. Regarding the therapeutic methods, the problem of children with learning difficulties is similar to that of children with SEN. In addition to the children with SEN, the children with learning difficulties are another proof of the need to promote a differentiated and individualized education, which emphasizes the individual with his possibilities, capacities, potentials, desires and interests and not regarded as a

negligible entity in a collective, which can adapt along the way, to the working (learning) rhythm of the group.

Learning difficulties refer to a situation in which students cannot learn properly due to certain obstacles or disturbances which may appear during the learning process and which prevent them from obtaining the expected results (Djamarah and Syaiful, 2011, *apud* Erviana, 2019).

Children with learning difficulties are a reality of all the states of the world and this reality should not be hidden and neglected. Educational-therapeutic intervention methods must be found to help these children get out of the impasse they are in. Some authors list some of the possible recovery intervention strategies: additional help, increased and sustained activation, emphasis on the essential elements, repeated and increased assessments, simpler tasks, involvement of the best in helping the weakest, neutralization of the harmful factors, etc. (Fodor, 1997, *apud* Mogonea, 2010) or recuperative, therapeutic, supplementary, orientation or reorientation activities, intensive training, depth of knowledge, development and creation, awareness-raising, individual activities or individualization of some sequences, activities in small groups, homogenized groups with relative stability, with variable working hours, training programs, with previously negotiated objectives and methodologies, authoritative learning, etc. (Maciuc, 2003).

Learning difficulties can be specific to a certain field (mathematics, foreign languages, etc.) or they can have a generalized character, i.e. one that is extended to the entire plan of the intellectual activities. Some may characterize a certain school subject, others may be characteristic of all subjects. Some can affect instrumental, basic skills (eg: dyslexia, dyscalculia) (Alamro, 2019). Some children who have learning difficulties may have certain areas of their psyche affected, as well as others may have several areas affected (understanding, reasoning, thinking, etc.), respectively difficulties related to the basic psychological functions (Korhonen, 2016, *apud* Al-Qadri *et al.*, 2021, p. 2). Often, these difficulties are corroborated with different problems of character, motor, social, emotional type, etc. The etiological and symptomatological heterogeneity, recognized by most authors, involves the case study, the current, careful and systematic observation, the use of a differentiated and individualized pedagogic-restorative methodology, because a child with speech difficulties has different therapeutic needs than a child with learning difficulties due to certain disorders at the level of thinking or understanding. We must also mention the fact that, in some cases, learning difficulties may affect the child for a short period of time, in others, due to their severity, compensation is not possible (Blanchet, Assaiante, 2022).

The free, entire and harmonious development of the individual in our present society, ideally stipulated by the Education Law, can only be done by implementing the principle of equal opportunities, and equal opportunities can only be supported through a differentiated education, through a differentiated and personalized educational offer. Differentiated education and instruction requires the adaptation of learning, of the school curriculum (purposes, strategies, content, evaluation) to the real possibilities of the students (what they can do, without support, help), but also

to the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky), that is, to what he could do (possibly with support, help from an adult), adapting to one's own rhythm of working, studying, learning, to the capacities of understanding, reasoning, thinking. Individualization does not regard the group as a monolithic entity, but as an entity made up of a multitude of entities. Individualization does not treat the school group as a whole, but the emphasis falls on the specifics of each part that makes up the whole. Considering the problems faced by the child with learning difficulties compared to his/her other classmates, it is preferable to pay more attention to these children during the instructional-educational activities.

Another basic principle in remedial education is that of early intervention. Children with learning difficulties show various symptoms from the moment they enter kindergarten: anxiety, running away from classmates or kindergarten, crying, hyperkineticism, attention deficit and instability, slowness in thinking, in reactions, motor slowness or, on the contrary, psychomotor agitation, emotional and affective lability. All these symptoms that are easy to identify can be corroborated with other deeper, camouflaged psychic symptoms, that are harder to observe. They become more pronounced with the transition to public school. Therefore, the early, precocious intervention in their detection increases the chances of recovery and the chances of a good school placement.

In addition to a differentiated and personalized curriculum, which takes into account the educability coefficient of the students, the learning capacities of different contents in the curricular areas, as recuperative pedagogical measures, with a view to differentiated and individualized treatment, can also be mentioned: individualized educational programs, which target all the substructures of personality (sensory-motor, perceptive, language, thinking, affectivity, etc.), the organization of the timetable by level groups and, as the case may be, even for each student individually, depending on the potentialities and characteristics of the person, on how the activity of the tenured teacher and his collaborators is organised (support teaching staff, speech therapist, psychomotor therapist, etc.), depending on the specific and operational objectives of the teaching-learning and corrective-remedial activities, emphasizing the formative assessment and the achievement of a continuous feedback between the proposed objectives and their level of accomplishment, the organization of the physical and social environment, which would allow the harmonious development of the school, instructive-educational and compensatory-recuperative (compensatory) activities, the development of some extracurricular activities that could contribute to the transfer of knowledge.

The challenges of the contemporary world and especially of the future - as far as they can be predicted - are multiple and complex. The need for differentiated education and instruction is determined by these challenges. The advantage of a pedagogy of change, focused on the child, is given by the fact that it offers children more chances of free development in accordance with their biopsychic potential. The fight against exclusion and marginalization in school contributes to the individualization and personalization of learning.

The third millennium proposes a pedagogy of diversity, because the present school must recognize the diversity of the human being and the inter-individual differences. Living together, being together, learning together does not mean living, being and learning in the same way, following the same pattern, but it means giving free course to "living", "nature" and "learning" according to one's own interests, desires, abilities, rhythms. The pedagogy of the gifted children, the inclusive pedagogy, the educational alternatives are directions of evolution and development of the pedagogy of diversity, differentiation, individualization, under the conditions of a democratic, non-discriminatory society and of the existence of equal opportunities for instruction and education. They are now joined by the pedagogy (education) of the children with learning difficulties (remedial education), as a new direction meant to study the psycho-pedagogical problems faced by this category of children, still insufficiently investigated and as additional evidence for supporting the existence and functioning of a pedagogy (pedagogical theory) of differentiation and individualization.

3. Research Methodology

The research problem

The problem of learning difficulties can arise both at the level of the subjects who fall into the category of normality, and the subjects who, for certain reasons, cannot meet the school and social requirements at the level of the norm, a series of efforts and approaches meant to make possible or easier their school and socio-professional adaptation being channeled towards them. On the other hand, the same problem of the learning difficulties can arise at any age, taking into account the fact that each level of mental development assumes new acquisitions in terms of behavior and memory, which involves the development of new cognitive structures, the restructuring of the old notional systems in the light of the new acquisitions, etc. The acquisition of new knowledge, however, can also involve a series of difficulties with a very diverse etiology. However, many of these difficulties can be removed or at least reduced, if their appearance is detected early and if an attempt to remove their generative cause or, better said, the causal complex that determines their triggering is made. This is actually the starting point of the current research: detecting the appearance of possible learning difficulties and, in case they are detected, the attempt to reduce their frequency of manifestation and, if possible, even their definitive removal.

The research carried out took into account the possibilities, the strategies to remove the learning difficulties that can appear in a regular class in primary school years. Considering the wide spread of the learning difficulties within the curricular areas and the school subjects corresponding to them, we believed it to be more effective if we carried out a research focused on a specific curricular area, respectively on a specific subject, in a specific class. The research could target any class, curricular cycle or any subject from the seven curricular areas, but, obviously, one and the same research could not capture, in an exhaustive and explicit way, all these difficulties and their generative causes and above all effective strategies for

their removal for everything. That is why the experiment we carried out focused on a specific class in primary school - the 4th grade - and on a specific subject from the "Language and Communication" curricular area – Romanian Language and Literature. We considered it necessary to choose Romanian language and literature, taking into account the weight and importance of this area and subject in the Education Framework Plan, as well as the importance of abilities, skills, assimilated knowledge/ formed in primary school as a basis for the next level, the secondary one. Also, we considered it necessary to carry out a research in the 4th grade (although it could be done in any grade), considering the fact that the students in this grade are preparing for the transition to a new level, higher, the gymnasium.

Research hypotheses

We consider the following *basic, general hypothesis* as the starting point of this research: if the fourth-grade students, who encounter visible learning difficulties in the Romanian language and literature, are presented the knowledge that must be assimilated, in a new way, using modern, active and interactive strategies, effective types and forms of learning such as discovery learning, cooperative learning or differentiated instruction, these types of learning and strategies being based on the use of appropriate methodological tools, then the difficulties of learning the Romanian language and literature will be reduced, and the success and school performance of the students will increase significantly.

The particular hypotheses, derived from the general one, aimed at achieving some important objectives of the School Curriculum for the 4th grade, within the curricular area "Language and communication", in order to reduce the difficulties encountered in school learning, among which we mention: the development of perceptive functions, the development of the spirit and critical thinking, of observation, the fine development of the phonemic hearing, the development of the ability to receive and emit written and oral messages, the development of vocabulary, the formation of current, cursive, conscious reading skills, the formation of orographic writing skills, the formation of the ability of communication based on the knowledge of the construction elements of communication, sensitizing the students within the activities, developing attention, motivation for learning, stimulating their imagination and their creative spirit.

Based on these assumptions, the whole experiment was constituted, with its stages, each stage having distinct objectives and its own methodological tools. Also, taking into account the identified learning difficulties, a remedial-formative intervention program was elaborated and implemented, a program whose purpose was precisely to reduce these learning difficulties in the 4th grades, in the Romanian language subject.

The purpose and objectives of the research

Starting from the theoretical considerations above, we designed an investigation, with the aim of clarifying the possibilities of an early detection of some insufficiencies at the level of cognitive psychic structures, respectively to see the conditions in which the psycho-pedagogical diagnosis can bring to the surface relevant symptoms for determining the difficulties of learning, symptoms based on

which future difficulties can be foreseen. If, during early schooling the real problems faced by the students and the causes that generate them were revealed, this aspect would be useful for removing those difficulties in the future, in the higher levels. The data thus obtained should allow outlining some intervention programs to prevent the generalization of the learning difficulties.

The possibilities of identifying children with learning difficulties during their early school years are particularly important from several points of view. On one hand, the early detection of learning difficulties would presuppose their early therapy, thus ensuring the prerequisites for good school success in the higher levels of schooling. On the other hand, noticing how frequently the learning difficulties show would be a starting point in preventing their appearance in the series of younger students.

Today, it is (re)known quite precisely, partly based on the research undertaken, that the level of school success or failure depends not only on intelligence, not only on intellectual factors, but also on a series of other factors, of a non-intellectual nature or personality. It is known that there are not rare cases in which learning difficulties appear against the background of an average or even high level of intelligence, so these difficulties cannot in all cases be explained only on the basis of the children's global intellectual characteristics. The problem is that the results of the intelligence tests, even of the most famous ones, do not show us which are those partial psychic structures that should be stimulated and activated for the good integration of the child.

That is why the research undertaken is not necessarily focused on the stimulation of different functions or psychic structures, but especially on other structures involved in the acquisition of the new, such as the perceptual-motor ones. In this sense, it can be appreciated that the revealing and precise knowledge of the perceptive functions, of the sensory-motor structures, of the so-called gestalt-type visual-motor receptions of forms – represents a more valid forecast of the quality of later school learning activities. We should not forget that we are also at the level of the 4th grade, where induction still functions as the predominant means of acquiring knowledge, obviously combined to an increasing extent with deduction. It should also not be forgotten that during the preschool and early school years, the intensive and gradual structuring of various perceptual functions takes place, the differentiation of vision, hearing, tact and spatial orientation, their more accurate and efficient functioning, the gradual integration and systematization of motor and sensory (perceptive) actions. The perceptive degree of evaluation of the global perceptive apparatus is a sine qua non condition of the knowledge activities. Its deficient state leads to the appearance of specific learning difficulties. Therefore, it seems obvious that a series of learning difficulties can be diagnosed and treated from an early school age (a series of dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia), but they can also appear in the form of a general weakness and low motivation to learn. So, we can start in this research from the theoretical presumption regarding the fact that, under certain conditions, with the help of a psychopedagogical therapy effectively oriented

towards the diagnosed cognitive deficiencies, the subsequent appearance of school learning difficulties can be prevented.

In developing the research objectives, we started from the consideration that learning difficulties do not represent totally irreversible handicaps, and that through the development of group pedagogic-therapeutic programs, or in certain individualized, formative and compensatory cases, these difficulties can be eradicated, or at least mitigated.

On the other hand, we must always keep in mind that difficulties – many of them – can be prevented, avoided, if they are noticed early. This aspect must be respected all the more, as the young pupil has to face the future demands of the higher school levels.

The research also took into account the applicative-practical implications of Gardner's theory (2006), which starts from the idea that some children with a high intelligence quotient do not have good results at school, being considered "smart" only those who have good results in intelligence tests. He started his theory from a series of personalities (Picasso, Einstein, Spielberg, Mozart, Ghandi, Churchill, Freud, Darwin) who had big problems in school, encountering different difficulties in acquiring knowledge, especially in certain subjects.

Gardner sees intelligence as a way of solving problems and developing products that are accepted or considered to be values of human culture. Studying the way people solve problems, Gardner came to the conclusion that there are eight types of intelligence that can be defined based on ten criteria, among which: the existence of an intrinsic system of symbols (words, numbers); the manifestation of that particular ability should have taken place since the first signs of people's existence on earth; knowing in which part of the brain the respective intelligence is located. Based on detailed studies, Gardner distinguishes eight types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, naturalistic, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal. In addition to these eight types of intelligence, Gardner also discovered the ninth, but due to the fact that he could not specify which brain area is responsible for activating this intelligence, it is not recognized.

A central objective of the research was therefore the stimulation of the development (the acceleration of the development) of linguistic intelligence, through methods, strategies, types of learning based on cooperation, discovery, problematization, all these based on differentiated training.

In conclusion, we could say that, on the one hand, we sought to detect those pupils who encounter different learning difficulties and discover possible symptoms of certain future difficulties, and on the other hand, in the case of detecting these learning difficulties, the proposal of some programs of group or individual recuperative intervention.

The research took place in the 2021-2022 school year, making use of the results obtained from previous years, through investigations, systematic observations, discussions with the students, parents and teachers, the research of the school documents (gradebook), the analysis of the students' mid-term and annual school performances in the targeted subject and, by extension, in other subjects.

The sample of subjects included 10 classes, all urban, i.e. a total of 240 students, with an initial level (constative stage) approximately equal in terms of the results in the targeted subject. Among them, 145 students (6 classes) constituted the control sample, and 95 students (4 classes), the experimental sample.

In the *constative stage (pretest)*, on the basis of a methodological toolkit made up of various evaluation tests, discussions with the parents, observations, analysis of the activity products, school documents, the interview, it was possible to draw up a vast spectrum of the difficulties recorded in the fourth grade students, among which we can mention: behavioral aggression, anxiety, withdrawn, isolated behavior, language, oral and written communication disorders, at the level of perception, even language retardation, inhibition, negativism, psychomotor instability, tachylalia, bradylalia, difficulties related to the orientation and concentration of attention, irritability, garrulity, indiscipline during classes, disinterest, low motivation, asthenic moods, too high or too low suggestibility, tendency to "whisper", disinterest, indifference, reverie, dreaming, dysgraphia, dyslexia, illegible writing, confusion of letters, inversions, omissions of them, difficulties related to the short and long-term memory, weak phonemic differentiation, low phonemic hearing, low observing mind, low concentration, low analysis and synthesis capacity, poor comparison, in-line arrangement, generalization capacity, elementary confusions between grammatical notions, reduced imaginative possibility, diminished creative spirit, low originality, etc.

These difficulties were also confirmed by the results obtained in a series of tests and questionnaires developed to ascertain the real level of students in grammar (syntax and morphology), phonetics, composition and reading.

The training activities in the *experimental* stage took place only in the experimental classes during one school year and were based on the transmission of information, the formation of skills, habits, practical and intellectual abilities with the help of modern learning strategies: learning through discovery, learning through cooperation, learning through problematization, these being crowned by differentiated instruction. A variety of active and interactive methods were used such as the exercise, the game (grammatical, phonetic, lexical, semantic, strategy, based on real or simulated action), problem solving, discovery, brainstorming (different variants of this method), brainwriting, synectics, the FRISCO method, the "cube" technique, the "cluster" technique, the "mosaic" method, algorithmization, the method of practical works, interactive training, programmed training, etc. which have been combined with a wide range of appropriate means (boards, sketches, handouts with quotations, slides, overlays, etc.).

The efficiency of the training activities was highlighted in the *posttest* stage, when, following the reunification of the samples (control and experimental), by comparing the data, a significant increase in the school results obtained by the students in the experimental sample in Romanian language and literature was observed, compared with the students in the control sample.

Based on the comparison of the results, it was found that the learning difficulties (part of them) can be removed, can be reduced, especially those related

to factors external to their personality, i.e. factors related to the teacher's personality, the strategies he/she uses, by the immediate environmental factors (classroom design, different ergonomic aspects, etc.). Moreover, the intervention program focused more on these factors, in addition to those aimed at the development of intelligence or its various levels (cognitive structures and mental functions).

4. Results and discussion

By interpreting the results obtained through repeated formative assessments carried out during the training activities in the experimental classes and by comparing them with the results obtained by the students in the control classes, it was possible to record the effectiveness of the psychopedagogical intervention in the experimental classes, in the sense of noting an increase in school results at the experimental classes and maintaining an approximately similar level in the control classes compared to the starting point (initial assessment, constative stage).

In this sense, we consider the comparative-percentage presentation of the results obtained by the students of the two samples, in the posttest, to be useful, without claims of exhaustiveness:

a) The comparison of the grades of the experimental classes with those of the control classes, in the posttest:

Table 1. The grades of the experimental classes and the control classes in the posttest (as a percentage)

Grades	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Sufficient (%)	Insufficient (%)
Average of control classes	11	52	28	9
Average of experimental classes	21	59	17	3

So, in the case of the experimental classes, the students obtained as percentage more grades of "Very Good" and "Good" and less of "Sufficient" and "Insufficient", while the students of the control classes remained at the same level as in the constative stage, not registering any obvious increase or decrease in performance.

b) The comparison of the results in the tests, between the control and experimental classes, in the posttest.

If a series of tests and quizzes were used in the pretest (the constative stage) to establish the starting level (initial assessment) of all students, in the posttest stage test samples were also used (final assessment). In addition, formative assessment tests were applied throughout the course of the research, in order to observe any progress (action research). From the comparison of the data obtained in the posttest by the two samples (control and experimental), the following results were obtained for these samples (the maximum cumulative points for these samples was 150):

Table 2. The results in the tests for the control and experimental classes, in posttest

Scores	Points gained	Points lost
Control classes	Total	89
	Total (%)	59
Experimental classes	Total	118.5
	Total (%)	79

It is observed that the score of the students in the experimental classes increases by 29.5 percent, compared to the score of the students in the control classes. The efficiency of the training activities is thus proven, which means that the hypothesis has been confirmed.

Conclusions drawn from the research:

- The students in the control classes did not register a remarkable evolution on the school progress scale;
- The students in the experimental classes, following the application of the ameliorative intervention program, were able to successfully cope with the problems and school tasks derived from the specifics of the school subject under discussion;
- The learning difficulties identified and inventoried at the beginning of the research could not be permanently removed, but their consequences in terms of school activities could be reduced;
- The application of some active and interactive methods, the use of various educational means, the alternation of the forms of activity organization for individualization and differentiation, are premises of a modern and efficient education;
- The alternation of didactic strategies and the use of non-routine, innovative and creative didactic styles contribute to reducing the effects of the difficulties that students encounter in school learning;
- Increasing the period of application of training activities, simultaneously with their diversification according to the specifics of the school subject and the age and individual characteristics of the students, lead to considerable effects on the reduction of learning difficulties.

5. Conclusions

The daily instructive-educational experience clearly demonstrates to us that the vast majority of students who make up the school population demonstrate, during their educational activities, a behavior that is largely accepted by the teachers. However, some of these students are faced with different learning difficulties, difficulties that manifest themselves especially in terms of their behavior, but also in terms of their school performance.

The current education system has considerably enriched its educational offer, proposing a series of alternatives for students who, for some reason, cannot cope with the school requirements and demands. This is also where a series of recuperative, psychopedagogical intervention programs come in, even going as far

as individualized interventions and case studies. We must not forget, in this very context, the tendency of the current Romanian education to offer children with deficiencies who are under the study of special education the chance to integrate children with special educational needs into public schools. In other words, the needs for education have increased, the offer of education has increased, the school requirements have increased, all of which demanding in an increasing way the student, who feels more and more these difficulties, his first reaction being that of flight, of refusal, of abandonment.

The diversification of the information sources, the expansion of the educational offer, the rapid changes within societies, also determine a growing need for self-regulation and self-adaptation to all these changes. Not all individuals manage to keep up with these, therefore, diachronically speaking, the difficulties of adaptation and learning grow almost directly proportional to the increase in social-economic and implicitly educational requirements. This is also the reason why the individual of our days must be an open person, able to respond to school requirements first and social requirements later and, therefore, he/she must be tutored and guided to obtain these skills that ensure his/her future success. The school is the first institution that can successfully achieve these objectives and, therefore, it is imperative that the students who form the school population are prepared to face these demands, and if they fail to solve these demands, it is necessary to apply a specialized intervention program, a recuperative program.

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