



The case study describes the progress of a child from disadvantaging environment who is visiting a school club where Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) method is being utilized.

Model casuistic – Darinka, 10 years old

Personal anamnesis

Darinka comes from a relatively large town near Kosice. She lives at its outskirts in a poor Roma settlement, which is separated from the rest of the town by a concrete wall. This dire circumstance does not reduce her positive attitude. Darinka is a joyful girl who has built her own world around her.

Family anamnesis

Mother (*1978) and father (*1976) are not married. They have not finished basic education. Father have never worked since he left school. Mother spent most of her time on maternity leave. Their income consists of social benefits and child benefits. Darinka (*2007) was born as the seventh child. The parents have altogether nine children, three boys and six girls. The oldest of children (*1998), (*2001) and (*2002) have finished their school without reaching basic education and have no work.

They all live together in a brick shack with one room and a hall. They have no water in the shack and they carry it from water main or from a nearby stream. They installed electricity themselves, illegally. Heat is provided by a stove, where they burn wood.

The family looks cohesive. The parents do not have any major conflicts between one another. Father drinks from time to time but he is not aggressive. Mother does not drink or smoke and takes care of the household to her ability. She brings in food, clean clothing but does not bring them up or to any semblance of self-sufficiency. Her daughters do not help with anything at home, she has to do everything alone. Sons help father gather wood, chop it and bring in water.

The communication with mother is on a very good level. She is interested her children's results and attends parents' meetings regularly. She does not pay sufficient attention to her children despite our many agreements. Father stays reclusive in those matters. He does not attend the meetings and is rarely seen in the village.

School anamnesis

Darinka began to attend school preparation in the local community centre in 2013. She spent there 2 hours a day from Monday to Thursday. This helped her establish some basic routine in hygiene and get used to a different collective than her family.

Upon entering the school in 2014 she was put in zeroth grade. After consulting her mother she also began to attend the afternoon school club. Darinka grew up in an environment where she only heard Slovak on television. They spoke only Roma at home. Despite the year-long preparation she was only able to understand basic instructions at school. Further communication needed to be wholly translated to Roma.

The learning of zeroth grade was beyond her ability. Despite her age she was not ready for school. Her graphomotor skills were at a very low level. When drawing, she only chose black colour and only drew circles. She had a tendency to tear the paper. The most she enjoyed if she could take pencils out of the box and put them back in. Her behaviour was similar when playing games. She liked to demolish what her classmates built from cubes, she took their toys, and disturbed them. At the end of zeroth grade she was not able to discern colours and geometrical shapes. She did not learn and letters or numbers. She liked to sing children songs but only in a group. In spite of all this she was advanced to the first grade.

During the first grade Darinka made barely any progress. She was not able to embrace letters or numbers as the tempo proved to be too rapid for her. She spent most of her time in class drawing or she just sat in the back row and disturbed. She failed in almost all subjects and had to repeat the grade. However, repeating the grade brought no positive results at all. Therefore her class teacher recommended her for special-pedagogical examination, based on which she was moved to a special class. All of her older siblings were moved to respective special classes in the same manner. Next school year Darinka entered the second grade of the special class. The more personal approach of the teacher, smaller collective and easier curriculum do her well. Darinka successfully finished the grade.

Social anamnesis

Darinka is of a very particular nature. Her mother pointed out at our very first meeting that Darinka is different than her peers because she 'does not think at all'. She is not secluded from the collective by her classmates despite her being different. She always finds someone who helps her and gives her direction. She is not being laughed at. When younger, Darinka was often aggressive when playing or learning towards her surroundings. Towards other things, like notebooks and dolls, not as much people. When working in groups, she only sat and watched others, unconcerned. She likes to laugh but we often do not see the source of her joy. She respects adults, needs their attention but does not talk to them very much. When asked a question, she rarely replies verbally rather she is shy and remains silent.

Her teachers view her as a 'lost case'. She often hears she cannot do anything, does not know anything, to which she hangs her head down in sadness.

Time away from school she spends wandering around the settlement with friends or watching TV, she likes telenovelas the most.

Difficulties found after joining the club

As we mentioned earlier, Darinka was not mentally fit to enter to education process. Both her gross and fine motor skills were underdeveloped. She was not able to focus on any given activity. Even sitting down on a chair for longer period of time was difficult for her.

The biggest obstacle was her ability to speak Slovak being almost zero. We made an observation that Darinka is not able to meaningfully communicate even in her birth-tongue. She did not understand the instructions of tasks even when translated to Roma. She required a permanent assistance of an

adult. After being shown what to do, e.g. draw lines, she drew one or two before regressing back into squiggle. When we turned away from her she immediately tore or crumpled the paper. She was not able to perform in any task on her own. She was not able to not cross the lines when colouring pictures. She drew over the paper with one colour only, usually black, in just one minute. She had a great interest in drawing but in her way when she would take one sheet and drew few lines on it before reaching for the next. She had the same result when trying to write letters and numbers. She was not able to remember the steps to write them but neither was she able to follow the model with her pencil even after being shown how multiple times.

When we managed to learn a single colour on one day she would forget it the day after. Any attempt to teach her anything was met with the same result. We started from zero on every day. Darinka was not able to hold new information neither for short nor for long period of time.

Her memory did work to some extent when playing games. In the beginning she only threw toys from one place to another and damaged them. She enjoyed opening and closing boxes, which she spent a lot of time doing. Her great passion became a pram and a doll. She would often hurt the doll, hit it, throw it on the floor and yell at her unintelligibly. She had no orientation in time and often even in space. She asked the assistant a few times where she were, while in the club.

She registered her classmates but we did not see her talking to them. She only listened to them, giving one-word answers at best. She had no trouble asking us if she needed anything. Even when the communication was often non-verbal. She liked to be in a presence of an adult, she was calmer that way.

There were days when Darinka would shout out or laugh with no apparent reason. And she would not stop even after being told by classmates and teachers. Darinka began to gradually realize her falling behind her peers. Her so far enthusiastic behaviour disappeared and was replaced by reluctance to work and using phrases such as 'I do not know'.

Progress under the influence of FIE

We spent four years together with Darinka in our club. Out of which we have worked for three years with the FIE method. We went through two instruments, Organization of Dots and Recognizing Emotions.

Over this period of time we observed lesser progression compared to her classmates. Her behaviour improved. She stopped shouting at random. She is calmer, sitting down on a chair is not such a difficulty for her. She is able to concentrate on a task. She needs permanent assistance and visual aids, nevertheless.

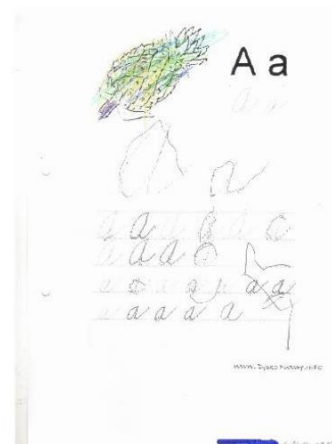
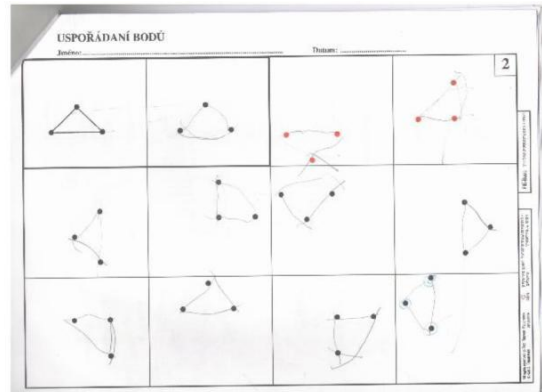
She understands Slovak much better, her speech, however, still leaves lot to be desired. She does not connect words into sentences. Thanks to the Organization of Dots instrument Darinka is able to discern basic geometric shapes. While at the beginning of instrument she was not able to connect two dots with a line, now she is able to draw a house. Her graphic display improved and she stopped drawing with just the black pencil. She began to perceive lines when colouring pictures. Thanks to FIE she started to distinguish between what is same and what is different. She can play pairs quite well, she even managed to beat us few times. She orientates better on a sheet of paper, she knows where up, down, right, and left is.

She is no longer aggressive towards things. She can play with the doll without damaging it. She ceased to take toys her classmates are playing with. She knows what yesterday, today, tomorrow,

morning, and evening means. She can tell when others are happy or sad. She learned how to be jolly about the results of work.

Conclusion

Despite her slower progression, Darinka wishes to keep on working. Thanks to her particular nature we would recommend replacing the work in groups by individual lessons of FIE.



Because of the nature of information provided the name of the child was changed.

Velka Ida, August 2018



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