



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 – Linda, 8 years old

Personal anamnesis

Linda comes from a Roma family, which lives in a socially secluded settlement near Kosice. She is a healthy and beautiful girl. She looks adequately for her age. She seems calm and balanced.

Family anamnesis

The parents of Linda are not married, mother (*1989) and father (*1990) have been together since elementary school. Neither of them has finished basic education. They had their first baby born before they came of age. She was taken into care by her grandmother who they shared household with at the time. Similarly her younger sister was also taken in by the grandmother. The parents have six children altogether, five girls and one boy. Linda (*2008) was born a third child. Their income consists of child benefit and social benefit.

Father likes to drink and then causes ruckus at home. He sometimes assaults his partner physically in front of their children. When drunk he is aggressive towards his surroundings. This was one of the reasons why they moved from the rented flat of the grandmother and built a brick shack in the settlement. It is made up of one plain room where two adults and four children live. Two oldest daughters stayed living with their grandmother. The shack is without electricity and water, the heating is provided by a stove, where they also cook.

The mother has been deaf since birth. She learned to read from lips. She takes care of her children, they come to school clean, nicely dressed, and they always have snacks. When their father causes ruckus she comes with her children to her mother who helps her as much as she can.

The children have respect for their parents, it can be seen at parents' meeting. Their mother treats them with love. They take education for important, thanks to which the children have excellent attendance at school and good results.

School anamnesis

The three-year-long school preparation Linda attended at a local community centre, where they worked with her each morning four days a week. She learned everything necessary for school entrance. During the admittance interview she was so able she did not need the zeroth grade and went straight to the first grade. We considered that a great success.

Linda got into the A first grade and is amongst the best non Roma students. The tempo was, however, too rapid for her. She learned all the letters but was not able to connect them into words. Her graphic display was very nice but it took her quite a lot of time to write something. She did not do well in mathematics as well. She did not completely understand her teacher's instruction and at home there was no one to explain the curriculum to her. Her lacking vocabulary, lack of home practice and her overall slower tempo were the cause why she failed the grade.

The following year they moved Linda to a Roma class. Repeating the year did her good. She handled the curriculum with no problems. She can read both written and printed text and comprehend it. She can add and subtract when going over decimal. She can memorize a text. She understands instruction and can work independently.

She likes going to school. She is liked by other students. She does not disturb in classes rather she listens to the teacher's explanation.

Social anamnesis

Linda is an independent young lady. She does not need to and does not seek company. She play just fine on her own. She is popular in the collective for she is conflict-free, never argues with other and is not aggressive. She knows how to make compromises. Because she grew up with her mother, who is deaf, she speaks in a calm, silent voice. We never heard her shout loudly. Communication with an adult causes her no problems at all, she is not nervous at it as most of her peers are.

She treats things around her, even toys with respect, handles them carefully so she damages none. She is eager to share with others. She is ready to help those who need it. She has liked drawing very much since the kindergarten. She is very accurate when drawing, she takes her time so that everything is perfect. She has a sense for both colours and rhythm.

She spends her spare time outdoors with friends or watches fairy tales. She often needs to take of younger siblings who are connected with her. She happily helps her mother with household chores.

Difficulties found after joining the club

With Linda we spent two years preparing for school. We became quite close over this period of time. When she entered school she wanted to go to the afternoon club. We admitted her as soon as a place opened (January 2017). Since we knew one another Linda had no difficulties adjusting to the collective at club even though she was younger than others.

Many of Linda's mistakes were caused by insufficient vocabulary. She did not understand what teachers wanted from her because they talked too fast. And she was afraid to admit she does not understand something. When she wanted to tell us something in Slovak she could find the right words and it usually ended up with her not finishing the thought and walking away. Or she told it the Roma assistant who would translate it.

She was impatient at tasks. She did not know what exactly was she to do and began working. She said she knew what to do. After a while she came to realize she cannot solve the task and after that she sought instruction and asked for help.

Huge obstacle for Linda was her slower tempo. E.g. at writing. Before she wrote the first letter few minutes had gone by. She then looked over the letter, deemed it ugly and began to correct it. She was sometimes so fixated on detail she disregarded the whole. She was too much of a perfectionist. She showed the same attitude with instruments. When Linda connected one square to her liking, rest of the class have finished the whole page. This was stressful on Linda, she had the feeling she cannot manage it on time and began to make mistakes.

She was never content with her results. On everything she did she looked for imperfections and pointed those out. After presenting a project on fruit she did not talk about the given subject but rather proceeded to point out what she cut out wrongly and what mistakes she made. When she drew over a line in a colouring picture she refused to continue and requested a new sheet.

When talking with someone she would cut in on them often. As soon she thought of something she needed to say it immediately. She was not able to wait for others to finish because she was unable to hold her thought while listening to what others are saying.

Progress under the influence of FIE

In a year and a half we managed two instruments with Linda, Organization of Dots and Recognizing Emotion. As Linda entered the club later she had to catch up with her classmates.

We went through all the Organization of Dots in a group of three students, only for a few last pages she joined the rest of the class. She handled the work in the instrument well, as she is able to perceive context and world around her. During this time Linda learned to listen to people around her and think before she starts to work.

We spent many hours discussing the system she works with, which bore its fruits. Linda is no longer that much frustrated by imperfections of her work, while from our viewpoint her results are excellent and still precise. She does not panic when she draws a line a bit astray or draws over a line in colouring picture. She can finish the picture despite making a mistake.

She learns to find the better in things and view the world from a better perspective. She tries to commend her own work and be content with it instead of only criticizing. She is no longer nervous about being always last. She came to terms with the fact someone needs to be last and she needs time to calmly fulfil her obligations.

While working with the Recognizing Emotion instrument Linda learned to have her own opinion on things and to respect that of her classmates. After a few pages she realized nothing is wrong when she does not agree with her classmates on everything. And that it is alright when we perceive a single image differently.

She began to work on her verbal performance. She no longer gives up when she is missing the right word in Slovak. She tries hard to finish what she wants to say. She refers clearly about her experience from both home and school. Holding her thought, while she waits to speak, is better every day.

