

## TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' COOPERATION ROLE WITHIN PROVISION OF PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS AT SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Skolotāju un vecāku sadarbības loma pedagoģiskā procesa nodrošināšanā speciālajā izglītībā

**Ilga Prudnikova**

Rezekne Higher Education Institution, Latvia

E – mail: ilga2@inbox.lv

**Emilija Cernova**

University of Latvia, Latvia

E – mail: emilija.cernova@lu.lv

**Abstract.** *In the article, the cooperation topicality is justified as well as teachers' and parents' of pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities cooperation role within pedagogic process. The authors of the article define the approach in the base of which there is teachers' and pupils parents' cooperation in development of individual education programs. Thanks to which the abilities of the pupils of for pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities are discovered and used as well as the need of these pupils to learn to act themselves is promoted . In the result of the empiric research, it is established that, in the evaluation of all the respondents, the indices over the research have changed with positive dynamics. This certifies that the society influences positively the pupils activities who are involved into the research.*

**Keywords:** *cooperation, pedagogic process, individual approach, pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.*

### Introduction

Within democratic society, a person is considered to be unique value who lives, studies among other people. Respecting man as value, the age of today poses its own demands to special education.

The recent tendency is like follows: as full as possible inclusion of pupils with medium heavy and heavy mental age disturbance not only in school but also in all the society, as well as participation into social environment (*Nīmante 1998, 2008; Bethere, 2007; Tihomirova, 2010*), but still large contradictions exist, if means, kind and process are looked through.

For each child with special needs, special education creates potential and conditions to study at the most appropriate education establishment , according to his state of health, abilities and development level. In correspondence with legislation, pupils with special needs can obtain education at any education establishment. Simultaneously, they are provided by pedagogically psychological and medical corrections, as well as by readiness to work and to live in society. (All-round education law, 1999, 49. p.). But uncertain is the answer to the question if

each school can offer and implement potentials to obtain education for pupils with special needs according to provision of their special needs.

In pedagogic integration, e.g. education, not only in special but also in all-round education establishments that is considered to be one of social inclusive phases of the pupils with special needs. A pupil with special needs is necessary of regarding provision and individual education program obtaining schedule. Responsibility for fulfilment of these activities is delegated to education establishment (All-round education law, 1999, 53. p).

LR Education and Science ministry have established special basic education programs provision plan for educatees with severe intellectual disabilities or with several severe intellectual disabilities (education program code 21015911) that allow to freely regulate the number of lessons in learning subjects for each school individually, according to individual abilities, state of health, development of the pupils, therefore it is important to determine individual qualities of these pupils. (In *ESM direction* Nr. 389, 2009). That allows to provide the potential and assistance to pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities to learn to act themselves that occurs in interaction with social environment (teachers, parents).

The agenda of the article – basing on theoretical sources and practical work experience, to analyse the cooperation within social environment thanks to which the competences of pupils' with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities are discovered and used. The need of the above pupils to learn to act is promoted.

### **Cooperation functions viewed historically**

Pre – condition of the problem of interpersonal relations between children and grownups were found in the primitive society. In this period the main objective of education was to acquaint with the surrounding world, teach them to use different things, create the tools and introduce a child into the social life, which is based on mutual aid and necessary cooperative activity for the welfare of the people. All family members have taken part in the children's education. All children without an exception got the same education. They could behave, as they wanted, because there were not punished.

It was considered in ancient China, that conditions for the ideal development are the inborn abilities and methods of the right education. Education was called the most special, but it was connected with bends of individual and diligence. The method of the schools founded by Confucius (5-6 century B.C.) supposes a dialogue between teacher and pupil (Джурицкий, 1999, 35-41).

Also in 20<sup>th</sup> century the most important problem of pedagogical activity is a concordance of the teacher's demands with possibilities of pedagogical process and child's interests. The thought about teacher – pupil interaction ran through the whole history of pedagogy. J. A. Komensky in "Great Didactic" wrote that pupil needs to be supported and if teacher is kind, friendly and treat the children with love for his neighbour he easily gains the pupil's love and respect (Komenskis, 1992).

The thoughts on pupil-teacher relations were found in works of other classics of pedagogy (in Europe: J.Herbarts, A.Disterveig, Zh.Russo; in Russia: N.Chernishevsky, L.Tolstoy, V.Suhomlinsky, P.Kapteryev, etc.). The important role in the optimization of communication, regulation of relation in school, creation the concordance between children and grown – ups play the researches of the famous psychologists (in Byelorussia: J.Kolominsky; in Estonia: H.Liimet; in Russia: N.Bodalyev, L.Bozhovich, A.Petrovsky, V.Karakovsky, V.Myasishev, L.Novikova, A.Leontyev; in USA: E.Bern, R.Berne, K.Levin; in Germany: M.Buber, J.Kramis, etc.).

In Latvia facts about democratic school are found in works of "Young Latvians" (A.Alunans, A.Kronvalds, K.Valdemars, etc.) and in works of "New stream" representatives (P.Dauge, J.Plieksans, J.Jansons, K.Are, etc.). There was found a thought about the expansion of the teaching content and mastering the methods of teaching. On the first conference of Latvian teachers (1873) the necessity not only to teach children, but also educate them in democratic conditions with democratic methods was confirmed (Černova, 1993).

I.Skuinsh wrote that in educational work take part two personalities an educator and a pupil. Each has the special role. But in order to make the educator's work more successful both parties should be active one as giving, but the second as voluntary accepting. In cases where is no such relation there is no education in its true meaning (Černova, 1993).

K.Dekens has pointed out many times that teacher should love children, treat them with a respect, take into consideration, that actions of an educator should not depress the child's personality, create the dismal mood. Choosing the methods of influence and withdrawing the demands towards a child the teacher should try "possibly bear in mind individuality of each child" (Černova, 1993).

Pedagogy should be simultaneously as a mean of personality education as well as a mean of development and reorganization of society. In the new pedagogy children are not frightened any longer, are not under pressure, but the natural peculiarities of children and freedom are taken into account. The pedagogical art should be transformed to the openhearted pedagogy (Komenskis, 1992, 7-36).

One more thing of the author, which is directed towards the co-operation: "Compulsion – is the worst method of teaching. To cause an interest to the learning subject is the best pedagogical method" (Obšteins, 1924).

This proves that co-operation is a joint activity in a process of which takes place the exchange of skills, spiritual values between subjects, mastering of the experience on the basis of humanistic interrelations and their content supposes the confidence.

Scientists stress three main aspects of the teacher's activity: development, education and socialization.

*Developmental function* – the main task is realization, knowledge giving and support.

*Educative function* – supposes the means, types and skills of the teacher's activity, which are connected with giving the children the skills, development of the abilities for activity.

*Socializing function* – its realization is implemented with two types of the teacher's activity consulting and variable socially significant activity.

The nearest surroundings – the family – influence the child and it is influenced by child himself. The difficulties faced by children's with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities parents (grownups), in many ways differ from other families everyday worries (Рубинштейн, 1986; Выготский, 1983; Liepiņa, 2008). Already the birth of such child gives great psychological trauma and also load to all the family members – it deforms the family and its structure (Baka, Grunevalds, 1998). The reactions of the parents are different These parents are secluded, contact a little, are choosy in their contacts (Friend, 2005). They have reduced acquaintance circle, even the contacts with relatives. High sensibility, easy irritability as personal character traits can be observed (Liepiņa, 2008). It is important for teacher to perceive and to establish relations with pupils' parents , because it is essential to clarify opinion of these pupils parents, in order to discover the peculiarities of children activities in other environment , in order to speak about quality as perfection. (Harvey, Green, 1993). Such approach emphasizes exactly uninterrupted improvement, advancement aspect , because parents and teacher's cooperation is essential, in order to promote the need of these pupils to learn to act themselves.

Special pedagogue (oligophren pedagogue) is special education teacher who “has acquired corresponding Professional qualification for pedagogic work with persons with cognition activity disabilities” (Freimanis, 2007, 12), who keeps large role within work with pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. They need specific knowledge in order to be able to understand pupils special needs and acquire the needed work methods and skills for work with pupils of moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.

It is important for pedagogue to help the children to construct their own knowledge, skills and attitudes , therefore the authors stress that, in spectrum of special pedagogue roles, the main is *investigator* role, starting already with pupil's enrolment in school. In the base of it, there is „right organising of all child-directed influence conditions” (Freimanis, 2007, 168), that can be considered like teacher's correcting activity. Within the work with pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, the work result can disclose very slowly. It is important for the teacher to perceive and develop relations with colleagues , especially with teacher's assistant – *second teacher*, who is cooperation partner within lessons. For both the teachers it is important to develop the relations with the pupils and parents because in the *result of this interaction* the mutual influence of individuals takes place that manifests as perception and attitude change. In the result of that, *new quality of cooperation* is established that in the characteristics of pedagogue A. Špona ,, is work of two or more people toward common agenda, harmonized

agenda achievement aims, approximated evaluation and self evaluation about the reached results” (Špona 2001, 108). This cooperation positively influences pupils’ activity.

### **Pedagogic process organisation at special education establishment**

Nowadays the modern psychology specialization that has developed in Western countries, gains more popularity also in Latvia. Its central idea – child is autonomous identity (Lieģeniece, 1999). That means – child with his individual unique personal qualities. According to this position, the demand to organize pedagogical process is promoted (Якиманская, 1996). This means that it is important that favourable environment conditions should be developed and that their self realisation would be supported. „The main task is to attain that each child should acquire *optimal activity system* suitable for him” (Hibnere, 1998, 16).

Special pedagogy tasks were formulated by Л. Vigotsky, stressing that „special pedagogy is to be connected with normal child pedagogy”, thus, work process must be based on „health pood” (Выготский, 1983, 50 -60). Л. Vigotsky promoted for his investigations the following task – to find the whole, the stored, that is into each child with intellectual disabilities , in order to develop it in certain favourable conditions by the help of grownup in such extent that the whole, the stored gains new qualities, calling these perspective potentials as *nearest development zones* (Выготский, 1991).

In Latvia, the main education aims and tasks are determined by State basic education standard, but its acquisition is provided by regarding Special basic education program, that foresees to provide individual education program development and implementation for pupils who have functional development disabilities. For pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, „special pedagogue together with parents develop individual work program” (Freimanis, 2007, 74) *individual education plan*, that is education process organisation fitted to child potentials, taking into account child’s experience, skills, cognition process peculiarities, the aims promoted in State basic education Standard as well as aims and tasks promoted in subject programs. Plan status of such education is determined also as „pedagogical correction – education program that is methodically and organizationally fitted to persons of obligatory education age , who need to supplement knowledge within basic education program” (All round education law, 1999, 1. p.).

Special basic education example foresees for educatees with severe intellectual disabilities or several severe intellectual disabilities to provide individual education program implementation for development of working practical skills for these pupils. In the cases of poorly developed any cognitive and motor skills , the school develops individual education plan with individual correction and rehabilitation classes. In these cases subjects and classes plan is not developed (Special basic education program example for educatees with severe intellectual disabilities or several severe intellectual disabilities, 2009).

Methodological suggestions for educatees with severe intellectual disabilities or several severe disabilities are developed for the following school subjects : Latvian, mathematics, rhythmic and music.

Education process organisation for pupils of moderate severe and severe intellectual disabilities is visually showed in figure Nr. 1.

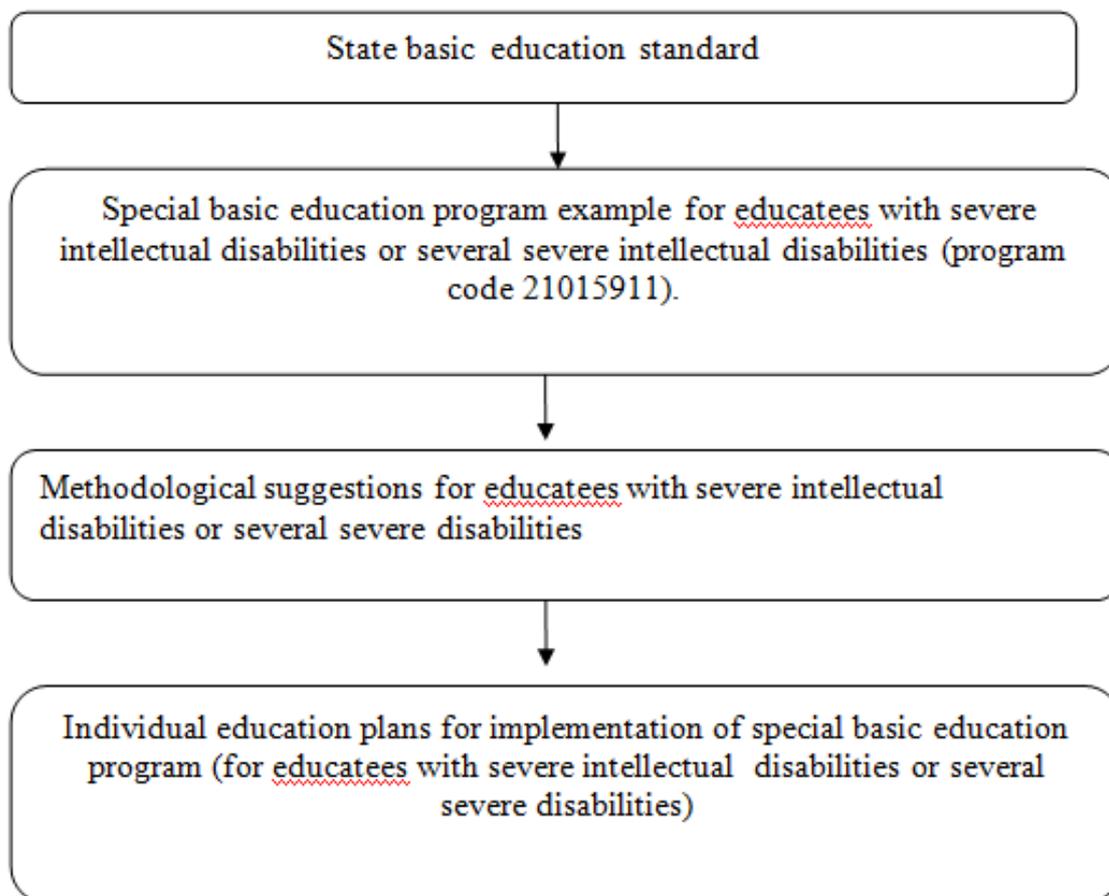


Figure 1. **Education process organisation for educatees with severe intellectual disabilities or several severe disabilities** (Prudnikova)

Education process organisation for moderate and severe intellectual disabilities show that basic education program general agendas and tasks , the basic education obligatory content, acquired basic knowledge of educatees evaluation basic principles and order , as well as basic education school subject standards – subject main aims and tasks, subject obligatory content, basic demands that regard subject acquisition, education attainment evaluation formulas and methodological aids are determined by *state basic education Standard*, but *in special education programs* , the education establishment the demands mentioned in state basic education standards implement according to educatee development disability kind , his potentials and health state.

The authors determine the approach in the base of which there is teachers' and parents' cooperation in the development of individual education programs. That agrees also with example of Special basic education program for educatees of severe intellectual disabilities or several severe intellectual disabilities (program code 21015911), where, into education content, it is stated that individual plan development, implementation and evaluation is a command work. That demands regular cooperation of specialists and educatee parents (legal representatives).

### **Research stages and results**

Research that consists of three stages :

**1st stage of research: September, 2006 – May, 2007**

**2nd stage of research: September, 2008 – May, 2009**

**3rd stage of research: September, 2010 – May, 2011**

were done using **co-partnership activity research method** (Elden, Levin, 1991; Whyte, 1991). Research performer and research participants cooperate continuously within research period. This was determined by necessity to solve practical problems. Process develops like spiral. This certifies regarding uninterrupted practice advancement and personal and Professional knowledge development. (Mārtinsons (sast.), 2011; Zuber – Skerrit, 1995;).

**Base of research** is formed by all five profession skills class pupils of Riga 1st special boarding primary school of the 2nd year with moderate severe and severe intellectual disabilities (diagnosis F 71; F. 72). In order to fully understand practical activity experience development for pupils with moderate severe and severe intellectual disabilities, parents of all these 5 pupils and second teacher are involved into this research.

*In cooperation with grownups* (teacher, second teacher (teacher assistant), pupils parent), that is two or more persons work towards common aim, coordinated aim achievement aids, approximated evaluation, the necessity was promoted to determine the level of knowledge , skills and attitudes, that each pupil with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities has achieved ,according to the individually prepared education plan.

In co-partnership activity research, the following was used:

**1. Indices achievement methods:**

- Documents investigation;
- Pedagogical process observation method;
- Investigation and analysis of work result done by children;
- Individual conversations;
- Evaluation in the beginning and end of each research phase;
- Personal pedagogic experience reflection;

**2. Indices analysis methods,** using statistics program *SPSS 17* (Statistical Package for Social Science):

- **Cross-line tables method** (*Crosstabs*), in order to obtain information regarding the research group:

- **Kendall's  $\tau_B$  (tau-b) correlation analysis**, in order to determine statistically important changes between each two research phases (Geske, Gr̄infelds, 2006, 2008).

**1st stage of research: September, 2006 – May, 2007**

The following results are obtained, analysing pupil's parent, teacher, another teacher, evaluation coherences:

1. **In pupil's parent evaluation**, essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) or maximally essential ( $p \leq 0,001$ ) changes are present between two research phases regarding :

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.046$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,038$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,000$ .

2. **In teacher's evaluation**, there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research phases regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.038$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,050$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,046$ .

3. **Another teacher's evaluation**, there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research phases regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.050$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,038$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,050$ .

For better obviousness and research results visual perception, the amount pictures are used (Vorobjovs, 2002), where evaluation changes can be observed into pupils parent's, teacher's and second teacher's evaluation between two research phases: phase initial evaluation and the first evaluation phase (see figure Nr. 2).

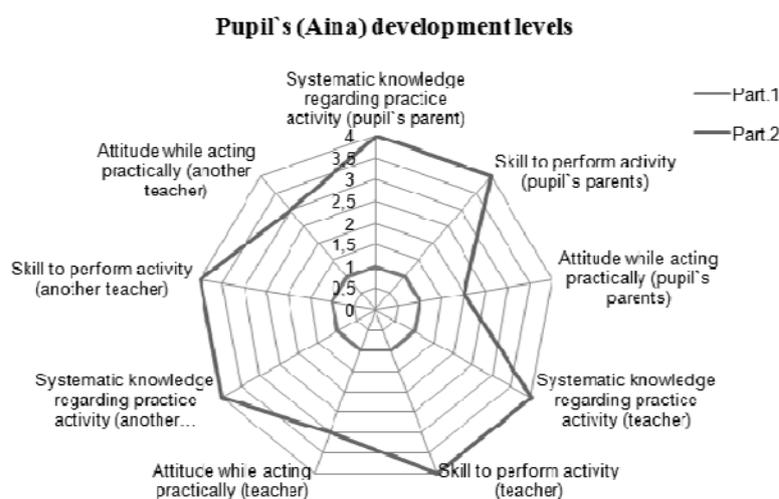


Figure 2. **Pupil's (Aina) development levels within evaluation of the pupil's parent, teacher and another teacher (Prudnikova)**

The analysis certifies regarding *growth in dynamics*, evaluating knowledge about practical activity, skill to perform activity and attitude while acting practically, from point of view of pupils parents, teachers, and second teacher, between each two research phases.

### 2nd stage of research: September, 2008 – May, 2009

The following results are obtained, analysing pupil's parent, teacher, another teacher, evaluation coherences:

4. **In pupil's parent evaluation**, essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) or maximally essential ( $p \leq 0,01$ ) changes are present between two research phases regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.015$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,049$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,006$ .

5. **In teacher's evaluation**, there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) or maximally essential ( $p \leq 0,001$ ) changes between two research phases regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.027$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,026$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,000$ .

6. **Another teacher's evaluation**, there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research phases regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0.021$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,026$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,026$ .

For better obviousness and research results visual perception, the amount pictures are used (Vorobjovs, 2002), where evaluation changes can be observed into pupils parent's, teacher's and second teacher's evaluation between each two research phases: phase initial evaluation and the second evaluation phase (see figure Nr. 3).

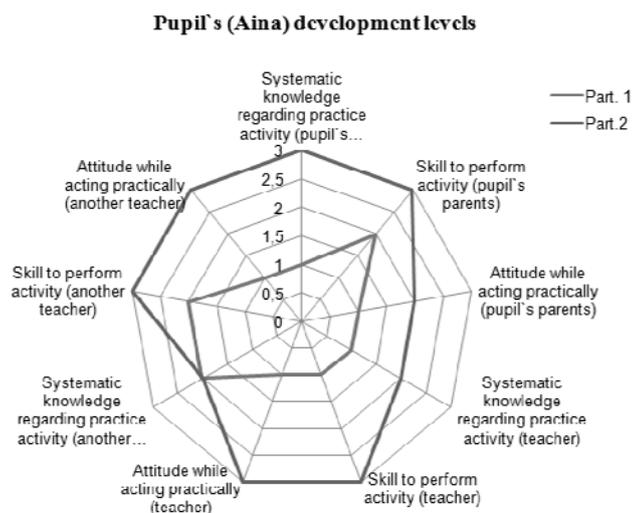


Figure 3. Pupil's (Aina) development levels within evaluation of the pupil's parent, teacher and another teacher (Prudnikova)

In total, the analysis certifies regarding *growth in dynamics*, evaluating knowledge about practical activity, skill to perform activity and attitude while acting practically, from point of view of pupils parents, teachers, and second teacher, between each two research phases.

### 3rd stage of research: September, 2010 – May, 2011

The following results are obtained, analysing pupil's parent, teacher, another teacher, evaluation coherences:

7. **In pupil's parent evaluation**, there are no essential ( $p > 0,05$ ) or there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research parts (initial evaluation level in evaluating phase and the third evaluation level in evaluating phase) within evaluating phase regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0,544$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,394$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,034$ .

8. **In teacher's evaluation** there are no essential ( $p > 0,05$ ) or there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research parts (initial evaluation level in evaluating phase and the third evaluation level in evaluating phase) within evaluating phase regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0,067$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,632$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,034$ .

9. **In another teacher's evaluation** there are no essential ( $p > 0,05$ ) or there are essential ( $p \leq 0,05$ ) changes between two research parts (initial evaluation level in evaluating phase and the third evaluation level in evaluating phase) within evaluating phase regarding:

*Systematized knowledge about practical activity* –  $p = 0,067$ ;

*Skill to perform activity* –  $p = 0,056$ ;

*Attitude while acting practically* –  $p = 0,013$ .

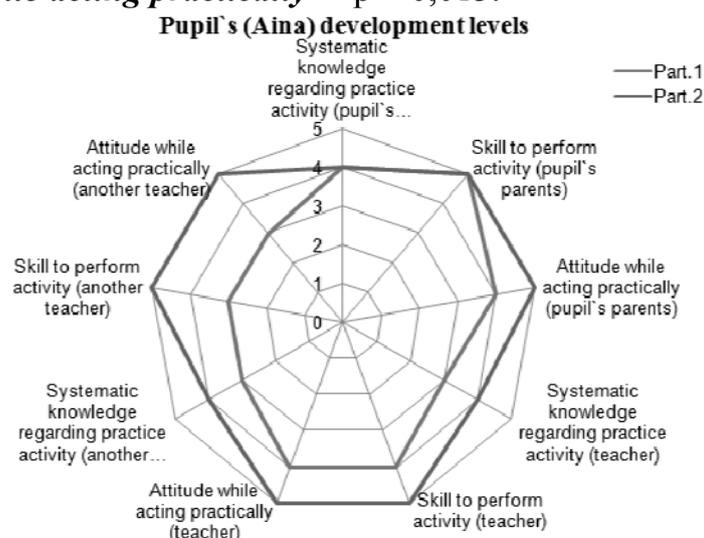


Figure 4. Pupil's (Aina) development levels within evaluation of the pupil's parent, teacher and another teacher (Prudnikova)

For better obviousness and research results visual perception, the amount pictures are used (Vorobjovs, 2002), where evaluation changes can be observed into pupils parent's, teacher's and second teacher's evaluation between each two research phases: phase initial evaluation and the third evaluation (see figure Nr. 4).

In total, the analysis certifies regarding *growth in dynamics*, evaluating knowledge about practical activity, skill to perform activity and attitude while acting practically, from point of view of pupils parents, teachers, and second teacher, between each two research phases.

### Conclusions

1. Child's with special needs growth personal growth potential or limitation of it is essentially influenced by teachers and parents cooperation that allows to provide child-centred approach, promoting in the centre not the disabilities, but the child , his personality , his strong side, his and development potentials.
2. School pedagogic process analysis allow to concluded that, by implementing *individualized approach*, the pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities need to learn to act themselves is favoured , by giving each pupil to self-realize.
3. Pupils parents, teachers, and second teachers evaluation indices, when observing:
  - Knowledge about practical activity,
  - Skill to perform activity,
  - Attitude while acting practically,

Have changed within process of research with positive dynamics, that certify regarding growth of research involved pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities , because these pupils potentials and discovered and used, as well as necessity of these pupils to learn to act themselves.

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<b>Ilga Prudnikova</b>	Personality Socialization Research Institute of Rezekne Higher Education Institution , Atbrivosanas aleja 115, Rezekne, Latvia, LV 4600 E-mail: <a href="mailto:ilga2@inbox.lv">ilga2@inbox.lv</a> Phone: +37129102257
<b>Emilija Cernova</b>	University of Latvia Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Arts E – mail: <a href="mailto:emilija.cernova@lu.lv">emilija.cernova@lu.lv</a> Phone: +37126320659