A mainstream education system with specialised support provision for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. A Swiss perspective based on the example of the Canton of Geneva

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Abstract
Starting with rights, directives applicable in the mainstream education and trends towards inclusion, the author describes the system of specialist education, which is still non-inclusive in many aspects and in most of situations concerning children with special educational needs in Switzerland. Using the example of the Republic and Canton of Geneva the author explains changes standardizing pedagogical influencing by primary school teachers which are currently in progress. This canton offers a specific possibility of providing education to hearing impaired children, which consists in bilingual teaching (French and French Sign Language) in a specialist class, in which deaf and hearing teachers work. This is not the only way of educating hearing impaired children in this canton. The second possibility, which is proposed the most frequently to children with implants, is learning in regular classes in mainstream schools. In Geneva these children, their peers and teachers can also receive different forms of support, which the author lists and comments on.

Reference

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Edyta Tomińska

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Introduction

Mainstream education setting and new trends in inclusive education Similarly to the German education system (c.f. Becker in this monograph), Switzerland, which is also a Federation, leaves decision-making about education to the cantonal authorities. There are 26 different cantonal systems, seeking shared solutions e.g. in the harmonization of the education project HarmoS1 and in the Inter-Cantonal Agreement on Co-Operation in the Field of Special Needs Education, which has not been joined by all of the cantons that are entitled to their own concepts and rights in the sphere of education and the specialised support and so on2.

The new curriculum for public schools (PER3), introduced in 2010 at the time of the preparation for the HarmoS Agreement, is compulsory across Romandie (Suisse romande), with its six French speaking and one Italian speaking cantons. The curriculum emphasizes the following: “Public school is to ensure the promotion of integration, taking into consideration the differences between pupils”, and further on that “Public school (...) differentiates its educational approach

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1 Introduced in 2011, Geneva being the first, experimental canton of this reform.
2 As of December 2014, 16 cantons out of 26 joined the Concordat and the HarmoS Agreement reform.
3 PER – Plan d’études romand.
depending on the pupil’s intellectual and emotional capabilities." The demand for diversity in teaching is also present in primary school teachers’ training, as it belongs to one of the important competences necessary for the future teacher: “to take the differences among pupils into consideration”. What follows is that primary school teachers in Geneva must have the extensive knowledge and skills allowing for teaching interventions in a diverse context of different cultures, religions and languages. Additionally, they must be able to carry out inclusive interventions with pupils who experience school difficulties or are affected by disabilities, as such are now the objectives of the Public Education Department. In spite of such clear wording and good top-down intentions, teachers often find it difficult to cope with pupils with special educational needs and require the assistance of specialised teachers who can assist them and collaborate with them on a path to inclusion. The question is, what is the place for deaf and hard of hearing children in this system? Where are they schooled? In a special or mainstream classes? On what type of support can they count? In this chapter I will attempt to answer these questions in three sections: the first will present an overview of the general education system in Geneva and the laws by which it is governed; in the second part I shall discuss the types of support available to children with hearing loss, teachers and pupils in integrated classes in Suisse romande; the third part describes the functioning of a special class for deaf children, which since the 1980s has operated a bilingual system of teaching, using French sign language (LSF) and French. The discussion is followed by a brief summary.

The general schooling system and its mirror effect in special needs education

Education is compulsory for children aged 4-15 across Suisse romande. The system is divided into 3 cycles: primary (4-8), middle (8-12) and lower secondary (12-15), as presented in Figure 1. The public schooling system in

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4 All fragments of the HarmoS Agreement and other Swiss laws originally published in French have been translated especially for the purposes of this paper.
5 Other romand cantons (Vaud, Valais, Neuchatel, Jura, Fribourg, and Ticino) adopted the HarmoS Agreement in 2013–2014, so the reform is very “fresh”.
6
Switzerland is not organized on the basis of 45-minute lessons but 90-minute teaching units, the content of which can be varied by teachers, particularly when working with the youngest children. The teaching cycles help teachers cooperate with pupils and surround them with intense care to prevent any future difficulties. This kind of cooperation allows for a long-term observation of learning progress. The transfer of information and cooperation is natural and problem-free between cycles 1 and 2, as they usually take place between the teachers of the same school. Cooperation between cycle 2 and 3 is much more difficult to organize because children usually change schools and type of teaching, from general to disciplinary.

Figure 1 below presents the education system in the Canton of Geneva.

![Figure 1. The compulsory education system in the Canton of Geneva, divided into 3 cycles: primary, middle and lower secondary (for children aged 4–15)](image)

As we can see in Figure 1, in spite of the declarations of the Public Education Department (Fr. DIP\(^\text{7}\)), and the international trend towards inclusive education, in this model special needs education is clearly separated from mainstream teaching. Children who cannot cope with school demands are from the youngest age referred to special classes, if the school has such special settings at its disposal, or to other specialist institutions under the Medico-Pedagogical Office.

\(^{7}\) Departement d’Instrucktion Publique.
(Fr. OMP\textsuperscript{8}), the aim of which is to diagnose a child and provide the necessary educational and therapeutic support. Let us look again at the assumptions of the \textit{Agreement on Co-operation} (2007) to see who is entitled to support in the mainstream school; in other words, what is the definition of special needs experienced by some pupils (e.g. those with dysortography, acalculia etc.), and what are the ways in which educational institutions, in the first instance a teacher, respond to these needs. I will discuss the organization of support or the ways in which support can be organized for deaf and hard of hearing children, using an example of one selected institution.

\textit{The Agreement on Cooperation} (CDIP, 2007) requires that the signatory cantons follow the regulations imposed by this legal act, such as introducing appropriate forms of support, deciding on uniform terminology\textsuperscript{9}, being compliant with quality standards and introducing a standardized procedure that helps determine a child’s individual needs. It also allows for a choice of the appropriate type of facility, such as a special school, special class in mainstream school, or mainstream class with appropriate specialist support. The latter type of education requires cooperation between regular and specialised teachers on a joint educational and therapeutic project, and is usually organized under the guidance of the Medico-Pedagogical Office, which also decides on the extent of the support to be granted (e.g. the presence of a specialised teacher in a class).

Article 2 of \textit{The Agreement on Cooperation} provides as follows:
- The tasks of special needs education are to be realized within the scope of mainstream public education.
- Preference is given to integrating over separating solutions, with respect for the child’s emotional well-being, self-confidence, etc. and the developmental possibilities, also considering the environment and school organization.
- Special needs education is free; however parents might be asked to pay for some of costs towards meals.
- Parents or their representatives will be involved in the procedure of deciding on the type of support or referral of a child to a different educational setting.

\textsuperscript{8} Office Medico-Pedagogique.
\textsuperscript{9} This was carried out in the field of hearing loss in 2014 and is available on the Special Needs Education Centre (CSPS) web page www.csps.ch.
So who is entitled to special support or a referral to a special educational setting? As mentioned in Article 3 of *The Agreement on Cooperation*, every child aged 0–20 who lives in Switzerland and who might have had any kind of developmental constraints prior to beginning compulsory education or develops them during its course has the right to a diagnosis of the difficulties or educational delays and to specialised care. Also, children and young people whose participation in the education process has been made difficult or who are in any way vulnerable because of other special needs have the right to support.

Article 4 makes the forms of support more precise, listing therapy (speech, psychomotor); advice and support given to parents, early childhood education, and special needs measures taken in regular school or in special school, support in specialist daytime institutions or residential school setting (boarding schools). One more article of *The Agreement on Co-operation* is of interest here, i.e. article 5, which specifies what should be done when the support provided is insufficient. In such cases, organizations such as Medico-Pedagogical Offices should intensify their efforts by including long-term, intense, auxiliary support that requires the involvement of a highly qualified specialist whose interventions will have substantial adaptive consequences for the social aspects of the child’s daily environment while also affecting the entire educational process.

Before we progress to the presentation of the situation in Geneva and see how the articles of *The Agreement on Co-operation* are implemented in this canton, particularly with respect to DHH children, we shall have a closer look at the types of support available for these children in *Suisse romande*, in the period of primary or lower secondary schooling.

**Data for romand cantons with regard to types of support for school children with hearing loss.**

Support in school education, to which children with hearing loss are entitled, involves mainly structural adaptations (organization of the class, place in the class, visual aids including the use of a laptop or tablet, assistance in preparing notes, extended work or exam time, etc.), and personal assistance (help of a specialist teacher, sign language or Cued Speech interpreter etc.). This type of support is usually refunded by cantons or municipalities local to the school (according to the OPERA\textsuperscript{10} data). As the authors of the OPERA report (Alber et

\textsuperscript{10} The aim of the project was to gather the cantonal data for comparisons and work out a harmonious early development support and education for hard of hearing children in this part of Switzerland.
al., 2012) observe, children with hearing loss, their class peers and teachers of integrated classes have the right to various types of support beyond individual therapeutic classes (speech therapy, psychological support) allocated to a child.

Table 1 below presents various types of group support available in schools.

Table 1. Types of support in integrated schools available to children with hearing loss in 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of support available in the school integrating children with hearing loss</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>JU</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>TI</th>
<th>VD</th>
<th>VS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For class peers, the learning of sign language or Cued Speech.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For teachers in an integrated class, the learning of sign language or Cued Speech</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For colleagues and teachers, explanation, information on hearing loss and hearing aids</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For teachers in integrated classes, participation in the meetings of a therapeutic/pedagogical group responsible for the child’s learning project</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As we can see from this breakdown, the teaching of sign language or Cued Speech is offered to students and teachers of integrated classes in all cantons. In Ticino, the Italian speaking part of Switzerland, Cued Speech is not widespread so the only way to support these pupils is to provide for the teaching of the Italian sign language.

The Swiss Federation of the Deaf organizes the professional teaching of sign languages in integrated classes, providing that the cantonal authorities finance these classes to ensure they are free of charge to children and teachers alike.

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11 The following cantons are part of *Suisse romande*: FR-Freiburg; GE-Geneva; JU-Jura; NE-Neuchatel; TI-Ticino; VD-Vaud; VS-Valais.

12 Depending on the choice of communication method developed in the family in early childhood.

13 French Sign Language (LSF – Langue des Signes Francaise), Italian Sign Language (LSI – Lingua dei Segni Italiani); German Sign Language (Schweizerische Gebardensprache).
For example the Canton of Neuchatel no longer finances this type of class, and in Geneva the teaching of Cued Speech is rare as it is regarded as being useful only in the therapeutic context (e.g. speech therapy) and has not been offered to teachers prior to 2013.\textsuperscript{14}

All cantons offer support for integrating meetings with specialists taking care of a child with special needs to provide information on hearing aids, implants, types of hearing loss and their consequences. Most often these are speech therapists, psychologists, physician or audiologists, invited to an integrated class to demonstrate and explain how a hearing aid or implant works, and why a child has to have it. They also answer any other related questions asked by teachers or children.

In all cantons, teachers have the right to participate in the meetings of the therapeutic and educational teams formed to evaluate and discuss the child’s development, plan the provision of further support and decide on its scope. They are the partners in the planning of a child’s programme and its aims for a school year, classroom materials adaptations etc.

A similar type of support is available to the child’s family. Depending on the needs, it is possible to receive sign language or Cued Speech lessons or information about hearing loss and hearing aids. The meetings are usually held in early childhood, when parental decisions about the preferred type of communication are made. The teaching of sign language or Cued Speech, which was previously free of charge and conducted in a family home, has been charged to parents since the academic year 2014/2015, as the cantons no longer finance it.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} With the center taking functionally-hearing children with hearing loss under its care (these are children with implants or those wearing a hearing aid) who learn in regular schools, who have the right to at least partial pedagogical support.

\textsuperscript{15} It can, however, be subsidized with the financing available from foundations, such as \textit{A Capella}, which organize the teaching of Cued Speech for children and parents. The Swiss Federation of the Deaf co-finances some of its classes for deaf children and their families, using subsidies from NGOs.
Special classes in mainstream schools in the Canton of Geneva

The Finnish model and the Genevan reality

A very interesting study by Natalina Meuli (2011) shows that even in a system as well developed as the Finnish model, students’ feelings of belonging to a peer group vary, depending on the time they spend in a regular or special class, where they receive support adequate to their needs. All children from special classes, working in a small group system, participate in the life of the school on the same level as their peers from mainstream classes. However, as demonstrated by Meuli’s study (2011), special classes often take more than 50% of school time, which does not have a very positive impact on the integration of special needs children with their peers in mainstream classes. In fact, it is more of a barrier for their feeling of belonging to the inclusive class. The more time children spend in a special class, the more they are as if “assigned” to it, and this is where they feel their place is. A comparison between the Finnish and the Genevan system makes sense only in one case of a special class for deaf and hard of hearing children integrated in a mainstream primary school, as indicated by the study by Meuli and Zuecone (2014). Why is this the case?

In Geneva, special needs classes in mainstream schools are held in a separate place dealing with children with considerable learning difficulties, often repeating a grade once or more. These special classes are smaller, usually consisting of approximately eight pupils, and they gather pupils with high-level difficulties from one cycle of education (4–8, 8–12, 12–15). It is difficult therefore to find some common denominator to make pupils feel that they belong to a group-class. Every pupil has different problems and needs, to which teachers try to respond in an individualized way. They also try to work individually on their pupil’s self-esteem, independence, motivation to learn, later stages of their educational project, vocational plans etc. It is very rarely that these classes co-operate with regular classes, so even partial integration is very rare. Even if one of the systemic objectives is the return of a child to the mainstream system, it happens very rarely, usually after considerable pressure from the parents. Things look different in a special class for deaf and hard of hearing children with its own real programme of integration. Since the academic year 2014/2015 these
projects are beginning to be introduced in cooperation with other specialised settings (e.g. in Geisendorf school). We shall continue with the description of this exceptional special class for DHH children with in section 3.3.

Special needs of immigrant children

In response to the needs of schools in various districts of Geneva, the Department of Public Education has created special classes for newcomers, known as reception classes\(^{16}\). These teach children who have just arrived in Geneva without knowledge of the language or the European culture that the school promotes. The reception classes are an attempt to solve the difficulties of children who were previously sent to a grade relevant to their year of birth, regardless of whether or not they went to school at all in their country of origin. The aim is to transfer a child to the mainstream class relevant to her or his age as soon as possible. These pupils are often offered partial integration with their future class, a few hours at a time. Gradually, with the progress of language acquisition and the improvement of the child’s communication and adaptive skills, the time is extended. The reception class, however, becomes an important place where these children receive specialist help, develop their linguistic and cultural competences in a timeframe and rhythm adapted to their needs, and with the use of teaching aids unavailable in other classes.

The CESM\(^{17}\) model between the Department of Education and Medico-Pedagogical Offices

Some historic aspects

Switzerland is divided not only linguistically but also according to the different areas of influence in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children. German influences, as illustrated in the educational theory of Heinicke, who was fascinated by hearing aids and their use in “hearing recovery”, imposed the

\(^{16}\) Classes d’accueil.

\(^{17}\) CESM – Centre pour Enfants Sourds et Malentendants du Montblissant in Geneva
use of the phonic method in schools for the deaf located in the German speaking areas. The *romand* part of Switzerland was mostly under French influence. Naef opened the first school for the deaf in Yverdon-les-Bains, Canton of Vaud in 1813, where he taught according to the Abbe de l’Epee’s method using sign language. However, the decisions of the famous Milan Congress in 1880 destroyed this budding tradition, and soon after all Swiss schools shifted to oralism. It was only in the 1960s, with the scientific recognition on sign language as a language (Stokoe, 1960) in USA, writings about the French Sign Language and the publication of its dictionaries in France (Moody, 1998) as well as the development of Deaf theatre (IVT) sent a wave of shock and brought changes also to French speaking Geneva. At the time of this revolution, the school at Montbrilliant street changed its character, from a closed residential school for the deaf to an open, bilingual school for the deaf and hard of hearing children. This did not happen overnight, or without controversy, especially on the part of the parents of DHH children. Obviously not all of them thought of sign language when planning the integration of their children into mainstream society. But for those who supported the changes, the approval of the bilingual programme for the academic year 1980/1981 allowed for the opening of a new era of education for the deaf children in *Suisse romande*. Schools opened their doors to deaf teachers, not only as the “native speakers” of sign language but also as educators and identity/deaf culture models for children and teenagers. This began a slow process of acquiring educational qualifications recognized or organized by the Department of Public Education. First, the school directors took the whole teaching team to Gallaudet University in Washington and then the Department of Public Education organized extramural remedial degree courses, allowing deaf employees to work in general education schools. It is important to clarify the fact that at the time deaf people were mostly directed towards vocational education, and rarely given an opportunity to go to the upper secondary school. So regular teacher training was inaccessible to deaf individuals, as a matter of fact still is. Other cantons also organized extramural specialised studies in deaf education to help include deaf people in the education of DHH children.18

18 Deaf teachers usually function as pedagogues/educators not teachers, in spite of the fact that they play the same role in relation to children as the hearing teachers.
Current changes in the functioning of the centre for deaf and hard of hearing children

Since the academic year 1980/1981, the centre has had varying objectives, which change and expand according to the altering needs of DHH children. Its most important goal is to provide primary and lower secondary bilingual education with the use of French Sign Language. The centre also organizes extra-curricular activities, such as meals for children and common room activities at dinner time or after school with the use of sign language as well as cultural excursions, school break events etc. It also provides specialised education to children with other disorders apart from hearing loss who cannot be referred to an integrated class in mainstream school. Since 2011, the centre has also supported the functionally-hearing children with implants who attend the public schools closest to their place of residence, and it has two specialised education teachers (SPES) responsible for the provision of educational support in the integrated class. Most teachers work with deaf and hard of hearing children in a special class run within the mainstream public school. In a bilingual class there are hearing and deaf teachers.19 DHH children are partially integrated into classes with other children of parallel age while they also receive specialised and language support in the special class. As they grow older and their communication skills get better, they stay longer in the regular class. Integration is carried out with the aid of a teacher specialised in deafness who knows sign language, Cued Speech or other such methods of communication. Specialised teachers work with the whole class, helping integrate DHH children. As reported by Karen Caputo, who analysed this kind of collaboration between specialised and general education teachers (Caputo, 2011), both deal with the whole class and prepare class materials together. In this way, the regular class teacher also becomes a specialist, gets to know the DHH children better and better, and adjusts the teaching to them.

This author highlights the fact that during integrated lessons, DHH children refer to the specialised more often that to the regular teacher. This is understandable, as requests for help will often concern difficulties with understanding the material, commands or the stages of exercises. In such cases, a specialised

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19 We are using the term “non-hearing teacher” for deaf teachers to emphasize that they play the same role in relation to pupils as hearing teachers.
teacher will also discuss this material later on during the special class, and help pupils understand it better, complete a task and prepare for the next lesson. The results of Cecilia Zuccone’s work (Zuccone, 2011) are very interesting. In her study, she considers the feelings of children from this specialised class, particularly the feelings of belonging to a group and being integrated in the regular class in this school. She demonstrates that in two different situations (physical education and maths classes) DHH children feel differently in the integrated class but that their overall feelings of being integrated in the class are the same as their hearing peers from the same class. Hearing loss and different methods of communication do not interfere, in these children’s evaluation, with the feelings of belonging to a group and a good assessment of integration. Zuccone observed, however, differences between DHH boys and girls and their evaluation of the level of integration and acceptance in the group during the PE and maths classes. The author explains the differences by discussing the specific nature of the classes. For DHH girls PE is more awkward than working in the class (being adolescent probably plays the main role here). DHH boys, on the other hand, prefer PE classes or find it difficult to make up their mind, when they say that they feel good in both situations.

The role of a teacher supporting the functionally hearing children

Let us turn back to the role of the itinerant teacher supporting deaf children with implants in mainstream schools. The teacher’s task is to support a child in compulsory education so to avoid learning difficulties and problems in other school situations. Work is usually carried out in small groups; the time allocated to each student depends on individual needs and can be different from one year to another, depending on the child’s development and achievements. Legally, each child given this kind of support is allocated up to 6 lessons a week with a specialised teacher, but for many children this is not enough.

These are some of the goals of such a specialised teacher: providing assistance to a child in the development of competences in the phonic French language, particularly written and verbal, and in its understanding. This work has an influence over other school disciplines. Besides, a specialised teacher is

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20 6 x 45 min.
responsible for broadly interpreted support in the acquisition of learning strategies as well as informing the regular class teacher and pupils on deafness issues, its consequences and the conditions necessary for anticipated/optimal integration. Also within the scope of a specialised teacher’s duties is the evaluation of difficulties, being at the disposal of the teacher and other pupils in the regular class in case of problems that may arise during the project. A specialised teacher provides communication and passes information between the different partners taking part in the DHH child’s education (a speech therapist, audiologist, sign language or Cued Speech interpreter, regular teacher etc.), and is one of the main partners in the integration project of a DHH pupil, taking an active part in the introduction, evaluation and, if necessary, adjustment of the project.

In practice, as the representatives of the centre say (lecture by R. Emery, 2013–2014\textsuperscript{21}), there are two specialised itinerant teachers on site (one full time and one 75%) providing support to 13 pupils distributed across the Canton of Geneva and in the 3-cycle education system, i.e. 4-15 years old. Additionally, 7 pupils are in contact with the centre, awaiting specialised support. Altogether the centre takes care of 60 pupils\textsuperscript{22}.

Learning to read and write in a bilingual class.

Now let us look again at the special class for the deaf and hard of hearing children in the centre and at the intensification of language acquisition efforts in the first cycle of general schooling, which is the early primary school age (4–8). The centre runs a bilingual programme with sign language as the language of communication and teaching (but also the language taught e.g. during classes called “fairy tales in sign language”). As Easterbrooks reports (2010; Easterbrooks, Bel-Alvarez, 2013), the following conditions are necessary for the achievement of optimal results in the development of the language and literacy knowledge of deaf and hard of hearing children: 1) teachers and educators should know the

\textsuperscript{21} These lectures are organized within the education of special needs teachers (Master en Enseignement Spécialise) on sensory impairments; half of the lecture concerns vision loss, sensory disorders and the second half is on hearing loss and its consequences. The author participates in these lectures, offering classes on a variety of scientific research currently being developed in this field.

\textsuperscript{22} The Opera data quotes 38 pupils with hearing loss in Geneva in 2010–2011, but this specific form of school support was not available at the time.
languages and communication methods used by a child to ensure clear, linguistically meaningful and rich communication 2) propose comprehensive classes which require inferential thinking 3) use visual aids to assist understanding, particularly in the organization, memorizing and, which follows, better assimilation of knowledge 4) to apply explicit teaching, systematically clarifying the general knowledge taught during the classes, particularly in the parts which are difficult for a child 5) assist a child by preparing gradual visual support in task implementation to take it step by step to more complicated material. (Ibid., 2010, p. 120–122). All of these conditions have been met in the classroom specializing in deafness, during the teaching of reading and writing entitled “interactive reading”, in a group of 6–7 year olds, observed for the purposes of my own research (Tominska, 2011, 2015). The classes are taught by two teachers; a deaf teacher, using sign language, and a hearing teacher, using a phonic language and sign language. The teaching allows for the free exchange of thoughts and hypotheses and testing with the aid of images and text in the book, i.e. recognizing some words independently or with a teacher’s help. Teachers in the role of mediators between the general literacy knowledge about books and their functions; give direction and rhythm to the children’s’ work on vocabulary, letters (with the use of the finger alphabet) and other aspect of the components of literacy components, e.g. understanding the structure of a story, its stages, protagonists etc. The possibility of using two languages allows for rapid progress, not only in learning letters and words but also in analysing the meaning of the fragments read together.

We should emphasize the importance of the deaf teacher’s role; his task is not only to explain and provide support in sign language but also to favour children’s’ understanding of the sign language and its internal structures. A deaf teacher is also a linguistic, cultural and identity model for pupils to follow.

Conclusion

By looking at the Genevan example, we can see the use of practical bilingualism rather than the form which is institutionalised in laws and decrees (Mugnier, 2014). The regional system has allowed for the introduction of innovations in the field and at the same time implementation of teaching objectives adjusted to a changing group of children with hearing loss, their abilities and needs, either in
a bilingual class specialising in deafness or in the regular class with the support of a specialised teacher. There is still a lot to be done in the direction of fully inclusive programmes, where children with hearing loss can receive the same assistance adjusted to their needs as children without disabilities in the regular class. Today, Geneva is still far from the Finnish model of School for all, regardless of the type of difficulties or deficits, although obviously in its inclusive model every child can count on the teaching method corresponding to its individual needs, implemented through a more or less individualized programme.

**Summary**

Starting with rights, directives applicable in the mainstream education and trends towards inclusion, the author describes the system of specialist education, which is still non-inclusive in many aspects and in most of situations concerning children with special educational needs in Switzerland. Using the example of the Republic and Canton of Geneva the author explains changes standardizing pedagogical influencing by primary school teachers which are currently in progress. This canton offers a specific possibility of providing education to hearing impaired children, which consists in bilingual teaching (French and French Sign Language) in a specialist class, in which deaf and hearing teachers work. This is not the only way of educating hearing impaired children in this canton. The second possibility, which is proposed the most frequently to children with implants, is learning in regular classes in mainstream schools. In Geneva these children, their peers and teachers can also receive different forms of support, which the author lists and comments on.

**References**


Selected issues of early-development support and education of children and youth with hearing impairment – comparative analysis on the example of five European countries

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Issues of Early-Developmental Support and Education Provided to Children and Youth with Hearing Impaired – Comparison and Perspectives for Research

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