

Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD)
Psycho-Social Services Department
August 1, 2017

The Center for Educational Research and Development is based on clear educational convictions and principles:

- Learning is a right for all without any discrimination or distinction.
- Every child has the right to be: listened to, respected, accepted, integrated, and motivated.
- No one has the right to segregate a child from the educational process of learning.
- It is the duty of each school to meet the needs of learners and take into account the individual differences among them.
- The progress realization of the educational agenda necessitates addressing the teaching learning process, educational policies, pilot studies, field research, appropriate learning environment, and curriculum approaches.
- Learners with learning difficulties are entitled to equal and adjusted learning within an integrated school system and a differentiated instruction framework.

Based on the above and with our commitment to these convictions, we carried out several projects and activities that concern those with learning difficulties and cater for their needs:

Continuous In-Service Training and Educational Researches:

The continuous in-service training is based on the results of educational field research sponsored by the Educational Research Bureau of the Center for Educational Research and Development. A study entitled "A Statistical Study to Monitor the Types and Numbers of People with Special Needs in Public Schools" showed that there are 73,793 learners with learning difficulties. The study was concluded by a set of recommendations on the basics of scholastic integration and its requirements.

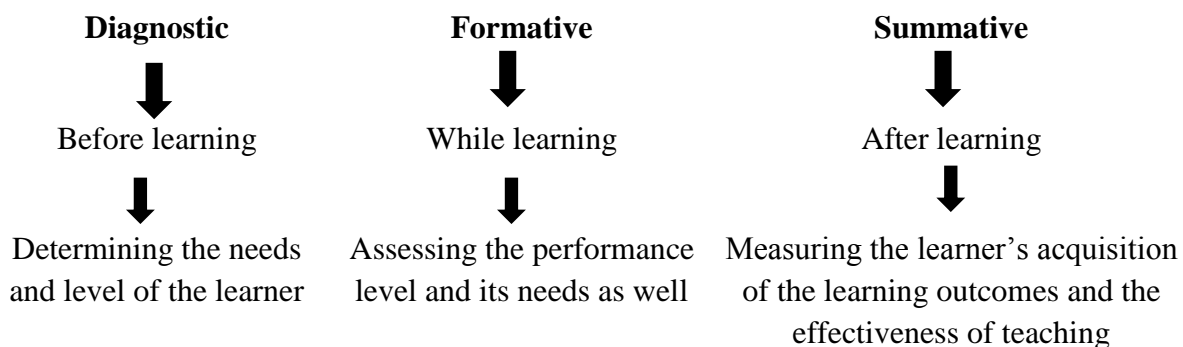
Continuous in-service training has translated these conclusions into the adoption of differentiated instruction education as an active learning strategy that enables the teacher to facilitate the educational process. Consequently, this teacher needs to be trained in order to master such a strategy.

In this sense, teachers are trained to perform several practices; the most important among them are:

- Pre-assessment by means of pre-defined diagnostic tools that determine the level of learners
- Adopting learners' abilities as an appropriate reference for diversifying the tasks assigned to them along with the deadlines allocated
- Flexible distribution of learners to meet the requirements of active learning styles
- Selection of resources and teaching aids that suit learners who have different learning styles and needs
- Familiarizing teachers with the learning patterns of learners and ways of identifying them

Therefore, the teacher is enabled by the skills he/she is provided with to classify and specify the levels of students through reliable and valid diagnostic tools which enable him/her to design activities that take into account the individual differences and needs of learners with learning difficulties. As a result, their objectives and learning outcomes will be achieved and met.

In the same context, teachers are trained on the principles of assessment in differentiated instruction:



In addition to what was mentioned earlier, continuous in-service training workshops qualify all teachers in the public sector to identify learning difficulties in class and to describe them through the Check Lists based on the Diagnostic Guide DSM IV and the Guide to Learning Difficulties and Mental Disorders which is popular in schools: Symptoms and Solutions (Remark concerning the guide and its importance).

Interactive Curriculum:

The Center for Educational Research and Development began to examine the elements of this curriculum and its requirements in terms of content, teaching methods, technological tools and the assessment system. In this respect, this curriculum adopts the competencies (educational and cross-disciplinary) as a basis for its design. This curriculum takes into account the needs of learners with learning difficulties and is based on the document titled "Upgrading the Educational System" which is concerned with differentiated instruction and active learning methods.

Supportive Resource Centers:

The pilot project at the Resource Center at Jounieh Teacher Training Center is one of the most successful pilots that adopt diagnosis as a basic principle for identifying the condition of those with learning difficulties and special needs. The aim is to develop the individual intervention plan (IEP) which suits the learner's needs (free of charge). For this purpose, experts in speech and psychomotor therapy as well as those specialized in psychological and psychiatric treatment use diagnostic assessment for learners through intelligent tests, cognitive rating scales achievement,

and neuropsychological growth tests. Then, they follow up the cases through treatment sessions and accumulated reports; the thing which allows them to develop a portfolio for each case. CERD is planning to open seven similar centers in all provinces to generalize this pilot project. Besides, an electronic training platform is being prepared to determine the difficulties faced by teachers while dealing with learners who have special learning needs.

School Integration:

CERD contributed to the specifications of the official exams for learners with learning difficulties along with appropriate assessment standards. CERD also defined the criteria of the integrated school. Hence, it presented to the Ministry of Social Affairs (Higher Council for Childhood) the role principles of the integration strategy in terms of general and specific objectives in addition to their accompanying activities, interveners, audience, outcomes, and methods or tools of assessment and indicators.

CERD also presented to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education its vision regarding the specifications, assessment and scoring mentioned above.

CERD also participated in the Ministry's workshops to develop a unified model for the integrated school. It presented its vision on integration through the Response to Intervention Framework, a multilayered approach based on early intervention and early support for learners with learning difficulties which has three levels of intervention:

Level 1: Teaching in the framework of a regular classroom in cooperation with a specialized educator

Level 2: Intensive teaching in small groups

Level 3: The teacher is an evaluative educator with the aid of direct intervention from other specialists.

This model shows how learners respond to high quality educational interventions.

Psychosocial Support:

The Center for Educational Research and Development has provided in-service workshops on the foundations of psychosocial support for teachers and learners so that they can overcome traumas and overcome their negative impact. Those workshops also provide them with effective communication methods, and tips for self-management, behavior control, enhancing confrontation capabilities, developing empathy and social integration.

CERD, through the department of Psychological and Social Services, integrated the concepts and techniques of the program in the course of the lesson in most disciplines so that the skills of psychosocial support becomes a life style and a thinking process practiced by teachers and learners spontaneously and evident in different behaviors and situations.

This program is important to train learners to accept each other, which facilitates integration for those with learning difficulties.

Expanding the Scope of Early Childhood Education:

This is a subject of great interest because it allows us to highly invest in humans. The measures of prevention, treatment and intervention at an early age reduce the effects aggravation of learning difficulties, especially that the kindergarten stage, according to Gardner, is the stage for establishing learning habits and psychosocial qualities.

Hence, CERD developed the KG3 curriculum and filled the cognitive gap at the level of the different developmental dimensions between KG2 and Grade One. It also provided a curriculum for Syrian refugees in early childhood education that took into consideration learning difficulties of those learners and met their needs in formal and non-formal education.

Excellence and Quality Standards:

What we have reported at all levels and in all areas is an evidence of our commitment to excellence and quality standards in integrated education. We have adopted accurate and achievable assessment indicators due to their validity and reliability. We adhere to one of CERD's studies:

"Dealing with special needs children does not require a special pedagogical approach that is fundamentally different from the regular curriculum. Since teaching those with special needs is part of the main practices of instruction."

Future Projects:

CERD looks forward to implementing many educational and psychological projects that and based on pre-planning and action research, which take into account the outputs of exploratory studies.

Some of these projects can be summarized as follows:

- Running specialized workshops in partnership with the Ministry of Education; Directorate of Guidance and Counseling, and the union of private schools; especially those which integrate learners with learning difficulties and special needs for the sake of developing a proper specification of the official exams for them, taking into consideration the peculiarity of different groups (deaf, blind, learning difficulties)
- Expanding training workshops on learning difficulties to include all teachers of Basic and Secondary education in the public sector because of its significance in achieving effective school integration
- Developing the content of the psychosocial support training workshop to involve principals and administrators
- Intensifying the field research work on topics related to the quality of education, school integration, learning difficulties and adapting the curriculum in a way which suits learners with difficulties, learning disorders and special needs

Acting Head of Psychological and Social Services Department



Center for Educational Research and Developments
According to the provision of its establishment and applicable decrees of this law
(Law no. 2356 dated 10/12/1971 + Decree no. 3087 dated 11/4/1972 + Decree no. 4517
dated 13/12/1972)

The Center is a public institution
with a juristic personality enjoying administrative and financial autonomy.
Furthermore, it is a general law entity independent of the State and Municipalities.

CERD's primary functions - Article 4 – Adapted:

1- Research and Educational Statistics	<u>Carry out</u> research and disseminate results (A 4-1)
	<u>Conduct</u> educational statistics and issue results (A 4-2)
2- Educational Plans and committees in the field of design (for different types of general education stages and specializations) initiative or according to Minister's authorization	<u>Prepare</u> educational projects (A 4-4)
	<u>Monitor</u> implementation of educational plans (A 4-5)
	<u>Review</u> educational plans (A 4-6)
	<u>Advise</u> to the Minister of Education on projects for establishment / expansion / modifications or abolishment of educational bodies (A 4-7)
	<u>Participate</u> ipso facto in the membership of committees in general planning (A 4-3)
3- Curricula and Official Exams	<u>Study</u> curricula and submit relevant recommendations (A 4-8)
	<u>Produce</u> textbooks, publications and educational aids (A 4-10)
	<u>Make final decisions</u> on textbooks, publications and educational aids. (A 4-10)
	<u>Approve</u> the types of official examinations, <u>coordinate</u> their preparation, and <u>attend</u> the meetings of examination committees (A 4-9)
4- Staff in all educational stages and fields (Pre-university level)	<u>Propose</u> qualifications required from applicants for jobs in all educational stages and fields (A 4-15)
	<u>Prepare</u> members of staff except for higher education (A 4-13)
	<u>Train</u> all staff in all educational stages and fields (A 4-14)
5- School buildings and educational Installations	<u>Propose</u> technical and health conditions that have to be met in educational buildings and equipments (A 4-12)
6- Educational Documentation	<u>Undertake</u> educational documentation and <u>organize</u> a central educational library (A 4-11)
7- Others	<u>Carry out</u> other duties and authorizations called for under laws and regulations (A 4-16)

Note: A= Article

