

Trend of Inclusive Education in Central Europe

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The paper is input into the issue of pupil diversity, which should not be presented in the actual Central European educational area as a disturbing factor, but rather as a positive value. Central European countries, namely countries of the former communist block (Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland), after a long period of institutionalization of care for children with disabilities, accepted in the last two decades the philosophy of inclusive education in theory and practice. Inclusive education is a trend that will take a long time, probably. Therefore, it is the current theme, hot topic. The aim of this paper is to define the essence of the inclusive education, its background and perspective. The paper explains the philosophy of inclusive education and the legislative forms of common learning disabled pupils and intact pupils in ordinary school facilities in Central Europe, with a focus on the situation in the Slovak Republic. We analyze the laws that were the inspiration for teaching laws around the world (EHA, IDEA), we are focus on their reflection in the Slovak Education Law and on the other laws on education and training in other Central European countries. The aim of this paper is highlight the different views of experts on this issue, either they agree to abolish special schools and education of pupils with special needs in mainstream schools or they are in favor of a compromise solution. In the end of the article, we define the objectives, assumptions and principles of inclusion in educational practice. The major challenge is to ensure that the inclusive education is available to all, everywhere and always, and accept the individuality of man in all spheres of life.

Homogeneity versus Diversity

For the implementation of education based on the principle of diversity is important for the teacher to be able to identify the class of basic phenomena homogeneity and diversity. It should constantly calculate the fact that in certain criteria, all subjects are similar (homogeneous), while they are all in some way different from each other (diversity) (Morvayová, P., 2006, p. 5).

- Homogeneity means that something is composed of a parts which are the same species.
- Diversity (diversification) for the opposite, since it is composed of different types or is formed of different parts (Laubeová, L., Kalinová, M., Weissová, P., et al., 2005, p. 46).

According to V. Kurincová (Kurincová, V., Seidler, P., 2009, p. 152) diversity in the context of the pupil population, includes diverse groups of students, at different stages of schooling. From preschool to high school, to become inspired by humanistic internationalist traditions of culture and education centers. Class population consists of:

- pupils (students) – their mother tongue is also the official state language, but they grew up in a bilingual family;
- pupils (students) – their mother tongue is other than the state's official language;
- pupils who are short time in the country as children of immigrant families;
- pupils from various socio-economic and cultural conditions of families, they are inadequately prepared for schooling;
- pupils with special educational needs (physical and sensory disorders, attention disorders and learning disabilities, emotional and cognitive impairment, etc..).

The transition from the approach largely upholds homogeneity (which is in today's classrooms most common case) to the approach favoring diversity and individual approach to pupils, which recognizes differences and works with individuals, has advantages as well as the possibility of problems.

In fact, they are very abstract ideas, which is difficult to recognize in personal life. They function more or less as the poles of the continuum, which are in the same game at the same time, but to different degrees. The approach upholds homogeneity is, when we promote the similarities between people and we expect, that everyone learn and behave as well. Access field to encourage diversity is when we realize individual differences, acknowledge them and focus on them to put forward a useful procedure for a dual

process of teaching and learning, which should take place in the classroom (Laubeová, L., Kalinová, M., Weissová, P., et al., 2005, p. 46).

We agree with the V. Kurincová (Kurincová, V., Seidler, P., 2009, p. 253), *"the understanding of human diversity is a prerequisite for the promotion of the idea of equality in the school environment and the philosophy of creating conditions for the fulfillment of individual needs of pupils"*.

It is important to remember, that we are all somehow alike, so we are also different in another way and that is the key task to find out what we have in common and how we differ from others. If the learning process is understood as a common task, this approach in education can be very useful.

Trend of Inclusive Education

In the European context is becoming more prominent trend of inclusive education. This is the concept of upbringing and education of all students – intact students, as well as pupils with special educational needs – in terms of mainstream schools and school facilities, which, as noted M. Horňáková (2006), the individual does not perceive diversity as a disturbing factor in the learning process, but it gives him a positive value.

Inclusive trend will tickle according to V. Lechta (2010, p. 35) probably continue to exist, and yet remains an unanswered question, how fast will run its course and what are its future prospects. As mentioned above, the first constitution in Europe for children with disabilities were established in the second half of the 18th century. The process of institutionalization (fragmentation) of care for children with disabilities lasted over 200 years and resulted in a progressive educational segregation (selection). So if institutionalization, which can be understood as opposed to the inclusion process, lasted so long, it should be noted that the opposite, inclusive trend can be short, because all hasty and thoughtless solutions would work counter (Lechta, V., 2009). That is, as the institutionalization of a long term process, the same applies to the inclusion process. In terms of overall trends, perspectives and the current situation, the success here according to tickle V. Lechta (2010, p. 35) to be a general consensus – accepting the philosophy of inclusive education in theory and in practice. Considerable political and professional role to play here and Guidelines for Inclusion, published by UNESCO in 2005.

Anthropological assumptions of pedagogy, including inclusive education, which can help reinterpretation of contemporary education of generally defined Kudláčová B. (2009, p. 28) as follows:

- 1. assumption – *Proper understanding of man's place in the world* – is the position of man in the right place, which is not a measure of education, but its circumstances and opportunities. The risk of misperception man's place can eliminate consideration as a dimension of transcendence necessary for the contemporary man to cope with the possibility that it opens the mind and freedom.
- 2. assumption – *Proper understanding of man as a person* – the right understanding of man's place in the world is closely related to human understanding and as such, the man is a body-psycho-spiritual unity and whole. The spiritual dimension is the basis of the unity and integrity of the person, and it expresses this compactness, it is also the foundation and guarantor. The meaning of life according to him, acts as the highest integrative factor of human behavior, survival and integrity of man is completed, thus reaching its identity.
- 3. assumption – *The proper relationship between freedom and responsibility* – because man is being reasonable and free, his self-development should delimit the responsibilities inherent in the ability to respect certain boundaries, known as the maturity of personality. Mature man realizes its potential and limits of what constitutes his human dignity. Sense of his own dignity and worth permits to respect the value and dignity of other people, which is a prerequisite for coexistence in a multicultural and multi-religious environment.
- 4. assumption – *The right choice of values and the distinction between good and evil* – the choice of values depends on the quality of life. If education has lost its anthropological and axiological essence, lead one to good and teach him to distinguish between good and bad behavior, education should cease to be education.
- 5. assumption – *Man as dialogic structure* – post-modern man is increasingly recognizing their individuality and uniqueness, which allows him to communicate and engage in dialogue and in relation to others and to present yourself. Relationship Type I – You like authentic dialogue, protect people from extreme subjectivism and egocentrism.

As reported by F. Armstrong (In Sádovská, A., 2009), each child is unique, has specific interests and educational needs that are important in education. Majority school system has adopted an inclusive orientation as an effective way of eliminating discriminatory

attitudes, creating supportive communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

One of the most important tasks is currently under V. Cabanová (2007, p. 45) to create optimal conditions for the process of school and society-wide follow-up to her inclusion. In the philosophy of solving this problem regards the strengthening of the social position of weaker members of society, their protection against segregation, social exclusion and differentiation. Improving establish the situation requires the introduction of a number of systemic measures and supporting actions, which in practice means the implementation of inclusive measures in school and social education, the daily struggle against prejudice and persistent stereotypes.

We realize that attitudes and approaches to persons with handicaps in the history of education developed and extensively changed its appearance. New space for discussion opens just inclusive education, which is providing qualitatively new approach in the treatment of people with disabilities. Efforts to accept everyone in the human community should be directed to the adaptive educational system through the creation of a maximum level of development of the potential of mutual respect divergent needs, emphasizing the vision of an inclusive society located its dimension in all planes of human existence (more in Žovinec, E., 2007).

Respect for Diversity in the Context of the Pupil Population in Central Europe

Every child, every student is a unique creature, which is determined from the first beginning, not only by heredity and environment, but also education. Together with his active involvement may develop favorable or unfavorable direction. In the second case, the influence of some of these determinants may be a certain deviation from the norm, when this man being different from intact individuals and requires a special approach.

Adapting instruction for exceptional students is possible only in the case of students with mental, physical or sensory disabilities, but also for gifted pupils, pupils with impaired communication skills, and students with specific learning disabilities and behavior. It is therefore necessary to adopt otherness as a possible source of enrichment.

If teachers, parents and educators want to succeed in education, according to B. Kosová (2007, p. 55-57), should they have such an attitude towards the pupil, which can be seen in three aspects:

- *The student is a valuable individual personality* – pupil has value and dignity, he is individuality and he can enrich others with something important or interesting. If a student is personality with your own value, he deserves not only respect, but also love, tolerance, consideration and dignity without humiliation, intimidation or ridicule. Considered for the pupil's personality means: to grant it rights and freedom, which include personality; to require him responsibility and conscious, spontaneously performance of duties; to believe in their own capacity to move forward; to promote everything, that encourages personal development and reject everything, that hinders his development. When is the pupil seen as a personality, is regarded as an entity with its own development assistance, he has a need to help and he wants to form his personality as positive.
- *The student is primarily the child* - the child has specific needs that needs to satisfy. It is a prisoner of its current wishes, needs, and often they can't renounce. The child is not governed by reason, but especially its own survival. It follows that the child can't be anything other than a child, even if it is just at school - in the role of a student.
- *The student is potentiality* – student is a potential personality, which is constantly growing and needs a permanent development. Education of the students should provide an opportunity to maximize the personal development of himself, and must find a dynamic balance between encouraging outside and inner maturation of pupil. Education should respect the ripening process with the current update, the pupil used all his developmental potency.

V. Smékal (2009), in the spirit of humanistic psychology, describes man as a personality, which is when: he has his face; he is author of his actions; he does not copy and imitate; is responsible for what he does; he knows the consequences of his actions, he addresses the role of his life responsibly and respectfully.

We believe that respect for diversity is necessary to ensure natural adoption, subsequent adaptation and mutual acceptance of pupils with special educational needs in the school and outside schools.

Platform of Diversification of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Central Europe

The law, which inspired educational reforms in the world, is the American law on education for all children with disabilities, on the right of all disabled children in integrated education (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, commonly known by the acronym EHA or as Law 94-142), which fully entered into force in 1978 (Pasch, M., 2005, p. 296 – 297). State schools have an obligation to provide children with disabilities a free appropriate, adequate education and individually prescribed so, that their handicap was reduced. The program is supposed to correspond in so far as students placed in the least restrictive environment, in which they have contact with healthy children. After several years of experience, American authors evaluated the results of successful implementation of the EHA (Průcha, J., 2005, p. 168).

The law is not used the term integration (mainstreaming), but just this term commonly refers to a displacement from collection of children with disabilities in segregated institutions and classes to the inclusion of these children into normal team, which is involved in many common learning activities (both within the standard school and extracurricular activities). Despite the difficulties the law pushed through significant changes in the education of children with disabilities. Currently, a major legal document is law IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Pasch, M., 2005, p. 297).

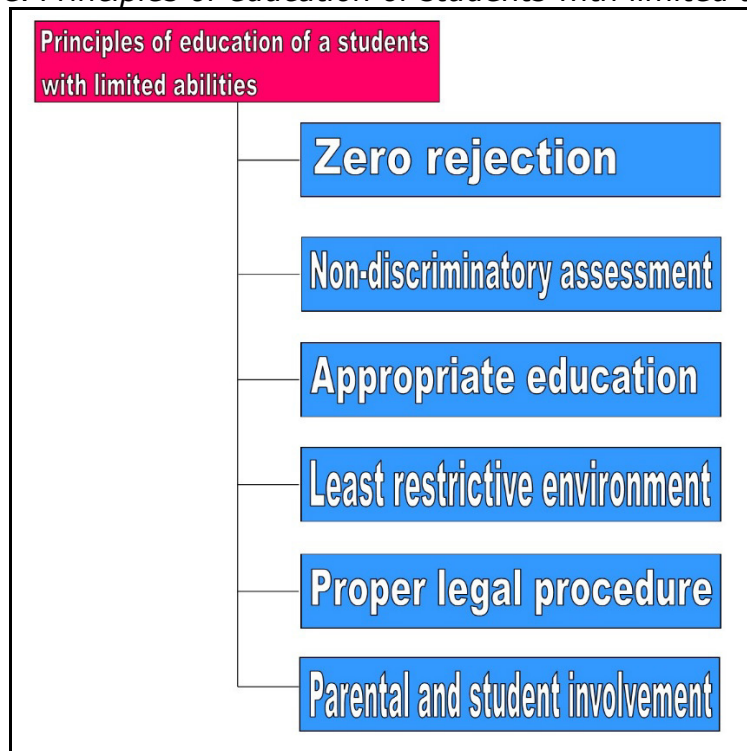
Some experts give an opinion as to pupils with special needs educated in mainstream schools. Their intention is to abolish all special schools. Other experts advocate a compromise that is already contained in IDEA document (Knoblauch, B., Sorenson, B., 1998, p. 6). It says that children to a suspicion of disabilities are evaluated by a multidisciplinary team that includes at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in that area. Team sets out based on a full evaluation of the individual educational needs of the child, whether the child requires special education and services. If the examination confirms that the child has one or more disability and requires special education and services because of disability, then locally determined provision of free, appropriate, public education for the child. Not all students, who have a disability, require special education, because many are able to go to school without any adjustment program. IDEA sends a clear signal about the school responsible to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms and curricula, with accommodation if necessary, to get involved and participate in extracurricular activities. Children are educated with other students with disabilities and students with no disabilities. Schools can place students with disabilities in special classes or schools, but only if the

support and services are not sufficiently help pupils, who are taught in the regular classroom.

Consequently, it is necessary to make the best possible care for pupils who are less able. They need to be educated with other students, for example, in organizations of special educational institutions.

IDEA sets out six principles that govern the education of a student with limited abilities.

Picture. *Principles of education of students with limited abilities*



Source: Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer (2007:11)

The authors (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2007) generally described principles as follows. *Zero rejection* is the principle that is against exclusion of any pupil. *Non-discriminatory assessment* is the rule that requires schools equitable assessment of students, whether they have a disability, and if so, what kind and to what extent. *Appropriate education* is a principle that requires schools to provide personalized education for each student based on an assessment extended to related services and supplementary aids. As next in line is the rule of *least restrictive environment* that requires schools to educate students with disabilities with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for students with disabilities. The principle, which ensures the security arrangements for pupils, including the right of bringing an action in court, is referred to as a *proper legal procedure*. In the last one principle – *parental and*

student involvement – asks schools to work with parents and adolescent students in designing and implementing special educational programs.

Globally, the most recent classification, which is now considered as binding, was approved in the year 2001 by plenary session of the World Health Organization (WHO) with the publication as International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – ICF (2003). In that codification is used as a key positive evaluation terms that are qualitatively different from the terms traditionally used in the normal course of special pedagogical approaches because it is based on a completely new core inventory: Physical function and structure - Activity - Participation. In bad cases, recognizes the activity limitations and participation restrictions (social participation in different aspects of life and living situations) (Leonhardt, A., Wember, FB et al., In Lechta, V., 2010, p. 24).

Our legislation provides for the joint education of students with disabilities and intact students. Diversity of the school population so expanded. Slovak Constitution (1992) in Art. 38 and Art. 42 guarantees for pupils with special educational needs special pedagogical care in education and training. The current definitions in this field, specific procedures, competences, rights and obligations of integration and inclusion, addresses the law on education (Education LAW) no. 245 Coll. (22 May 2008) and the resulting decrees and directives Ministry of Education. Education Act within the principles of education and training very categorically formulated strict prohibition of all forms of discrimination, particularly segregation. The law accurately characterizes educational needs of the pupil as a requirement to ensure the conditions, organization and implementation of the educational process in a manner that adequately meets the needs of its physical, psychological and social development. We must also be concerned with the special educational needs, therefore, with all the requirements for adjustment of the terms, content, forms, methods and approaches in education for the pupil, resulting from his physical handicap or talent or development in socially disadvantaged environment. Application of these principles is essential for the development of skills and personality of handicapped pupils, for achieving the appropriate level of education and social inclusion.

The school system in the Czech Republic is similar to Slovak, thanks to a common history. Children with special needs require a certain organizational structure and proper involvement of workers. In accordance with the Decree of the Polish Minister of Education (from 17th of November 2010 on the conditions for granting the organization of psycho-pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions) is provided to children with special needs and their parents psycho-pedagogical assistance since

September 2012. Educators and practitioners from Visegrad countries are confronted with the same application problems, the solution of these problems is in V4 countries different. Several papers on the topic said at the international conference *Inclusive educational aspect and its dimensions*, held in April 2012 in Smolenice. Inclusive education requires a lot of changes in the system of education, but also changes in the way of thinking. One of the first publications on inclusive education in Poland was the book written by prof. T. Zacharuk – rector of Uniwersytet przyrodnicza-Humanistyczno in Siedlce. The author emphasizes that inclusive education receives a child, how the child is. This form of education gives him the full right to be different. Its role is not to change, to adapt it to the system, but on the contrary: to change the system and adapt it to the child.

If we want to avoid marginalization and exclusion, it is necessary to agree that no disability can be a barrier to access to education. Every child should be entitled for attendance at a school-site housing. Inclusion allows children to participate in the life of a local company. After school hours, the child can play and meet with peers in their class – school. Thanks to healthy children have the opportunity to meet with the difference, and children with special educational needs don't feel isolated (Myszka, M., Klim-Klimaszewska, A., 2013, p. 235).

Special educational needs relate to the individual, who has to be supported and to an environment that provides this support. The school focuses on modern principles in education and is also open to the surrounding environment. Cooperation of teaching staff is one of the crucial prerequisites to meeting the educational requirements in heterogeneous groups (supporting system for common teaching). Common teaching requires the use of the process of team-teaching, two or three teachers are working together with one teaching group. Mutual cooperation of teachers, joint planning of teaching and precise coordination of cooperation in the classroom provide greater flexibility in organizing (internal cooperation). Integrative schools cooperate with pedagogical and psychological counseling services, with parents or with other professionals (external cooperation) (Průcha, J. (ed.), 2009, p. 443).

Application Objectives, Assumptions and Principles in the Process of Inclusion

Changes in understanding handicapped individual is gradually transformed into the definition and characterization of individuals with such special educational needs, to pedagogical theories, international documents, legislative standards and ultimately to practical life. When defining objectives, perspectives, objectives, tasks, content and process of education, is necessary to respect the many important international documents (Slovakia is committed to fulfill them), which has an impact on the issue of education. The most important documents: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (OSN 1948), Declaration of the Rights of the Child (OSN 1956), the European Social Charter (1965), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (OSN 1993), the Declaration of Helsinki Equality and services for people with mental disabilities (1996), the Charter of Fundamental Rights and freedoms, the Convention on the Rights of the Child... (Vančová, A., et al., 2010, p. 44, 423, 428).

Inclusion objectives are enshrined in internationally recognized resolutions and institutions that are respected throughout the world. OSN World Programme for people with disabilities (1983) requires that the education and training of disabled people carried out, if possible, in the standard school system. OSN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) requires that children with disabilities have full access to training, education and health services, and to use them in such a way as to allow the social integration of the child.

Inclusion is a priori acceptance of minority students with disabilities. This objective of inclusion is based on the Guide for Inclusion, which issued the UNESCO in 2005 (In Lechta, V., 2010, p. 30). While integration is here associated with the pedagogy of special needs (special needs education), inclusion joins the school for all children (education for all), the inclusive school, which considered heterogeneity enrich the educational process. The goal is "school for all children."

One of the objectives of education is to create such a school environment that would provide all students an equal chance to achieve an adequate level of education and ensure their right to develop individual skills. Principles and objectives of education of pupils with special educational needs must be read as:

- equal access to education,
- consideration of educational needs,
- free elementary or secondary education,
- the opportunity of learning throughout life (Průcha, J., 2009, p. 444).

As underlined L. Požár (2006), the actual concept of inclusion should prepare not only people with special educational needs, but also intact people, to live in a society in which always have been, are and will be people with different disabilities. We think it is necessary to extend education in inclusion and inclusive education. This public education would be beneficial for teachers as well as parents and not least the pupils.

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