

***Teacher Training Challenges in  
Implementing the Inclusion  
Educational System  
– Polish Perspective***

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*Małgorzata Sekułowicz*

University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland

# The current education system in Poland of children with special needs

The current education system in Poland of children with special needs provides the following opportunities:

1. a special school specific to the children with specificity and depth of disability;
2. a school in which the child is integrated in a class of 25 students with 3-5 children with disabilities (in which case there are 2 teachers per class either in kindergarden, primary or secondary school);

# **The current education system in Poland of children with special needs**

3. mainstream (regular) school in the framework of universal inclusion is a novelty resulting from the adoption of the new regulation of the system of education of children with disabilities in Poland of 17 July 2015 (implemented since January 1, 2016);

# Inclusive Education – Short Definition\*

- Inclusive education is a model taking into account the diversity of students;
- The most common interpretation of the "inclusive education" involves the social and educational relationship of the children with different disabilities;
- This is the alternative for either school segregation or specialty schools;

\* *this is the Polish interpretation of the general understanding of this concept*

# Inclusive Education – Key Points

- The process of inclusion meets the diverse needs of all students by extending the possibility of their participation in social life, reducing their isolation and exclusion;
- The process of inclusion requires changes and modifications to the content of training programs;
- This process requires changes in the approach of teachers and educational strategies, based on the belief in the necessity of general education for all children in a regular school, appropriate for the age of the child (UNESCO Declaration);

# Inclusive Education – Key Points – Continued

- Inclusive education requires a step away from the medical model of disability, assuming the perception of disability as a problem;
- Inclusive education is an idea of acceptance of people with disability in the social life from the perspective of the theory of full normalization;

# Inclusive Education – Key Points – Continued

- Inclusive school identifies barriers to full participation in the educational process for students with special needs;
- Furthermore, actions are taken to abolish these barriers;

# Inclusive Education – Key Points – Continued

- Inclusive education is a leading form of education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, **assuming that the school system is adapted to the individual pace of each child with regards to learning, abilities and capabilities.**



# Inclusive Education – Key Points – Continued

- In order for the school to function properly, all staff (**teachers, psychologists and other professionals**) should cooperate to create an integrative environment for children with special needs.

**During the process of inclusion,  
a teacher from a regular school  
should acquire thorough  
competences:**

# The competences are as follows:

- Independence;
- Dignity;
- Moral courage;
- Credibility;
- Self-reliance;
- Responsibility;
- Truthfulness;
- Compassion;

- The new regulation of the Ministry of National Education (January 1st, 2016) reevaluates the understanding of teachers' qualifications and competences in a regular school;
- This situation creates challenges with regards to teachers' training and the development of their qualifications and competences;

# The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion

- The ability to reflect and be flexible determines the extent of creative teaching included in the education, therapy and care of the children with more severe disabilities;
- Awareness of their role;
- The responsibility for the education, treatment, therapy (if it is necessary) and care for children with special needs;

# **The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion – CONTINUED**

- Ability to build the positive social image of the students with disabilities at the school, as far as their capabilities as well as the development of their self-esteem are concerned;
- Patience and perseverance in the integration of all the children and their parents in this difficult educational process;

# **The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion – CONTINUED**

- The authenticity and the ability to be themselves; being fair in relation to all the students, regardless of their level of functioning;
- The sense of fairness, namely the use of clear evaluation criteria and conduct towards students, taking into account their capabilities and skills;

# **The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion – CONTINUED**

- Organizational skills, both in teaching as well as for various other activities of children with disabilities, for example, participation in art contests or other activities;
- The ability of cooperation and collaboration with parents as well as regular students, therefore, providing a greater chance to develop better strategies in order to help children with disabilities;



# **The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion – CONTINUED**

- Ability to understand the child's disability, his needs and adjusting the tasks specifically with regards to his developmental potential;
- Resilience to difficulties arising from working with children with disabilities;
- Perseverance in overcoming problems arising from specific disabilities (ASD, ADHD, etc.);
- Ability to cope in hard educational situations;

# **The Characteristics of Teacher Qualifications and Competences in The Paradigm of Inclusion – CONTINUED**

- Ability to conduct psycho-pedagogical diagnosis of children with special needs in the school;
- Ability to adapt to technological changes; quick and creative assimilation of new methods;
- Openness to innovation, especially taking into account the pedagogical knowledge involving the new reality of social inclusion;

# Education Policy in Poland – The Necessary Actions

- Equal opportunities for all of the children - diverse support and funding;
- Financing of projects addressed to parents of students changing social attitude towards the children with special needs;
- The cooperation of universities with schools (especially regular schools) in the preparation of teachers for inclusive education, building their awareness with regards to disabilities;

# **Education Policy in Poland – The Necessary Actions – CONTINUED**

- Financial assistance for each student with special educational needs addressed by each educational institution;
- Conducting surveys assessing the degree of satisfaction of students, teachers as well as parents;
- Monitoring the process of building inclusive education - recognition of the difficulties, and support of schools by educational authorities;

# **Education Policy in Poland – The Necessary Actions – CONTINUED**

- Supporting institutions of inclusive education through the provision of equipment, teaching aids and new technology;
- Supporting inclusive education by employing the necessary specialists ie. special educators, psychologists, speech therapists, etc.;

# The Role of a Teacher in Inclusive Education

- Creating the best possible environment specific for each student's capabilities and their potential;
- Developing the strengths of the child;
- Motivating each child to participate in school activities, considering the nature of their disability and associated restrictions;
- Preparing individual educational and therapeutic programs specific to the individual needs of each child;

**Thank you for your attention.**

*gosiase@dsw.edu.pl*