Selected Aspects of Diagnosis and Bibliotherapy in a Child Education

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Editorial

For a few years now teachers of preschool and early school educa-
tion in Poland are obliged to diagnose children development, knowledge
and skills. The complex diagnosis serves all educational subjects: teach-
ers, children, and their parents. Teachers benefit from it, as it allows them
to plan appropriately the process of teaching, so that they can support
children in their versatile development through adjusting the pro-
gramme to their intellectual, social, and emotional capacity. Parents can
benefit from the complex diagnosis because thanks to the systematic
monitoring of a child's development they, together with the teacher, may
help those pupils who need it.

The interesting research in this scope has been carried out by Urszula
Oszwa, who, in the article *Current Trends in the Emotional and Social As-
pects of the School Readiness Research*, has analyzed contemporary trends
of research upon the school readiness based on documents available at
academic database. The overview of the research let the author distin-
guish six categories of research which has been discussed in the text. They
concern: defining the specific aspects of emotional and social function-
ing and their meaning for school cildren achievements; introducing new
tools designated for the research of school readiness; evaluation of early
emotional support in the context of school readiness; statistical correlation
between school starting point and pupils' achievements; defining the pro-
file of preschool children showing the problematic behaviour in order to
provide them with early intervention; mesurement of level of upbringing
functions in assessment of school readiness as a vital aspect of the future
students' social-emotional adjustment. A number of approaches, tenden-
cies and dimensions of school readiness discussed in article indicates how
complex and complicated this issue is.

The publication by Barbara Cygan, *Diagnosis as the Foundation of
Early Pedagogical Help for Children in Kindergarten*, is to show a role of early

diagnosis in detecting developmental disorders of preschool children. The author has displayed the results of experimental research conducted in two groups of kindergarten children. Among the researched, there were children who started education at the age of five and those who attended the kindergarten group much longer (two years). The research shows that early diagnosis and intervention allows to minimize the effects of children's developmental disorders. Thus, the period of child's stay in the institution is not without meaning.

More and more children are affected by autism which is the subject of consideration undertaken by Marian Stepulak, who, in the issue: *The Psychological, Ethical and Socializing Dimension of Childchood Autism During Preschool and Early School*, explains the notion "autism" in three fundamental areas. The first one is the breaking the social bonds or constrained ability to enter into interpersonal relationships; the second one – disturbances in communication; the third one – the stiffness of behaviour, limited repertory of activities and interests, connected additionally with the lack of imagination. Then, he presents the basic autism symptoms, to go further to psychotherapeutic methods and techniques. The author emphasizes that the therapy carried out can not affect the fundamental norms and moral principles. Particularly, trust and respect of the professional moral code seem to be significant. In the context of considered matters, the crucial postulate appears that therapists and other specialists working with the autistic children should work constantly on enhancing not only their professional competences, but also their moral standards.

Next articles undertake the matter of bibliotherapy in child education, which is a great way of pedagogical work not only with children with special educational needs, according to the analysis of texts prepared by scientists from University of Prešov in Prešov. *Bibliotherapy*, according to the definition by Leedy – is the process of assimiliation of psychological, social, and aesthetic values from books to human being's character, personality, and behaviour[1].

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[1] W. Szulc, *Kulturoterapia. Wykorzystanie sztuki i działalności kulturalno – oświatowej w lecznictwie,* Poznań 1994, p. 42.

The article written by Iveta Gal-Drzewiecka entitled *Educational Potential of the Artistic Expression of Visual Impairment in the Books for Children and Youth* is about possibilities of the usage of illustrated educative books for children. The research presented in the article was to define ethical and axiological dimention of child experience in the contact with illustations displaying the blind, and on this basis defining the possibility of using the research results in educational practice. In the research, the analysis of pupils' personal experiences was made, on the basis of which the author concluded that the child's contact with artistic interpretation of blindness provides authentic situations that let them recognize their own feelings, attitudes, and values, as well as the variety of cognitive styles, sensory preferences, and their own way of the world perception.

Zuzana Stanislavová, in the article: *The Disadvantaged Character in the Literature for Young Readers and in Inclusive Education*, proves that fine literature in early childhood can help in discarding barriers that the handicapped are exposed to in the society. The author analyzes a child's portrait with health and social problems in the contemporary literature (Alexandra Salmela: *Mimi and Lisa*, Gabriela Futová: *About the Hairless*, Peter Karpinský: *Adela, Do Not Even Try It!*) written for kindergarten and early school children. The analysis of literary texts was made in order to find answers to the following questions: what are the stereotypes reflected in behaviour of surrounding environment towards a person who is in an unfavorable situation; how do the literature main characters accept their own social role in unfavourable situations?; what is the role of a person being in an unfavourable situation in the concept of the story (active, passive)?; what is the extent of the drawback that becomes the obstacle in social functioning?; to what extent does it serve as an alternative source of self affirmation and sense of one's own value?

Jana Kožárová, in the article entitled *Current Research and Teaching Strategies for the Writing, Reading and Literary Education of the Pupils with ADHD,* proposes concrete methodological solutions, which should be applied in problematic situations such as the following ones: focus of attention, transmitting the thought in written form, fulfilment of long-term aims, observing terms, and alike. The author showed many interesting

strategies of work with literary texts that can be implemented in education of children with ADHD, because, as she states, educational intervention for pupils with ADHD has to be more intensive and more engaging than for others.

Radoslav Rusňák, in his speculations upon the role of literature main character in forming a child's personality and ability to deal with difficult life situations, in the text: *Educational Aspect of Disabled Literary Character from the Work of Walt Disney in the Primary Education*, claims that the novel *The Hunchback from Notre-Dame* and its film adaptation made by Walt Disney is worth paying attention in educational process. Reading books and watching films is valuable, as we never just read a book, but we read it to learn to control, uderstand and know ourselves.

Alica Petrasová, in the article *Critical Thinking Qualification as a Determinant of Individualization and Differentiation of Instruction,* poses thesis that it is necessary to change fundamentally aims, means, and the process of future teacher's education, with the assumpotion of perceiving them as promoters of science and experts in terms of pupils' social and individual development, and elaborating their critical thinking and abilities indispensible in pedagogical practice, which are mainly mastered through self-reflection. The author is for initial selection for teacher profession and constructing the schools-laboratories, in which students could have pedagogical practices.

The material gathered in this volume is a precious source of theoretical knowledge, and an inspiration for practical activities both in kindergarten and school.

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Articles

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Current Trends in the Emotional and Social Aspects of School Readiness Research

Abstract: School readiness issues have been a focus of educators for years. The number of approaches, tendencies and dimensions of school readiness indicates how comprehensive and complex this topic is. The analysis of contemporary research directions based on the papers available in academic databases allows them to be arranged into a few categories. They are all presented in the article with the aim of obtaining the current perspective of the problem, especially in the social and emotional context. Some authors try to determine the list of detailed aspects of emotional and social skills important to begin school education. The other approach presents the new school readiness tools. There is also a line that evaluates the early emotional support effect on school readiness. The next trend is formed by statistical meta-analyses of the correlation between the age of the school start and pupil achievements. The two new directions are related to the school readiness profiles and the idea of including executive functions into school readiness assessment as an important aspect of pupils' emotional and social achievements. The results coming from those six directions help educators to increase early education care.

Keywords: school readiness, social and emotional competence, profile, trend.

Introduction

The aim of the study is to review the contemporary issues in school readiness research, especially with regard to the social and emotional competence of children who are about to start their school education.

The analysis of the research allows to present it in six topics which are as follows:

1) determining the specific aspects of emotional and social functioning, and their predictive power for further school achievements (Fantuzzo et al., 2005; State, 2013; Davies, Janus, Duku, Gaskin, 2016);

2) introducing the new instruments of cognitive and non-cognitive school readiness assessment (Davies, Janus, Duku, Gaskin, 2016);

3) the evaluation of the process of providing emotional and social support for the kindergarten children before they start their school education (Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012);

4) statistical studies on the influence of pupils' date of birth for their academic achievement (Konarzewski, 2013; Jablonski, Kleka, 2015);

5) identification of the profile of preschoolers at risk of problematic behaviour in order to provide them an early intervention (Abenavoli, Greenberg, Bierman, 2017);

6) measuring the level of executive functions in preschoolers as an attempt to clarify the links between school achievement and socio-emotional adjustment (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; Baptista et al., 2016).

Those six trends which appeared in the international research will be presented in the paper in a more detailed way.

School readiness competences in social and emotional functioning

In much of the research directed to assessing school readiness in preschoolers there are skills and competences related to their emotional and social development as one of the important dimensions of the problem. There is no agreement among the researchers towards the complete

list of social and emotional competences which should be considered as crucial at the starting point of school education. Despite this, there have been numerous attempts to create such lists of these factors separately for emotional and social skills.

Among the emotional aspects of the school readiness, tests usually are subjected to: a) inhibition, which is one of the dimensions of the executive functions (Hatfield et al., 2016), b) ability to control one's own emotions (Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012); c) emotional expression and the ability to adjust to others (Stan, 2013); d) self-motivation (Fantuzzo et al, 2005); e) emotional maturity (defined as the absence of fear, aggression, hyperactive and inattentive behaviours) (Davies at al., 2016).

Other aspects of emotional functioning assessed in the school readiness scales include emotional regulation (Fantuzzo et al., 2005), understanding emotions (Stan, 2013), trust and confidence in others related to the attachment styles (Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012).

There is a group of researchers who pay more attention to the negative aspects of the behavioural and emotional symptoms indicating the preschooler's immaturity to begin school education. They assess the presence of the early conduct problems that can interfere with the academic achievement. Due to the fact that they can develop into the stable patterns very quickly, the authors suggest identifying them as soon as possible (Vitiello, Williford, 2016). The list of these early indicators of emotional problems include externalizing and internalizing behaviours, showing aggressiveness towards other children, or as opposed to it, being shy and resistant, subjective in expressing needs, lacking self-confidence.

The aspects of school readiness in the social dimension include in the research: a) a child's respect for the rules, b) their pro-social behaviour (Stan, 2013); c) engagement in play with the peers and with the whole group (Vitiello, Williford, 2016); d) the ability to interact with peers (Davies at al., 2016). Compliance to the rules, playing strategies and interactive behaviours are usually the ones that are present in most of the studies.

There is also research that has highlighted child-teacher interaction as a very important factor in preschoolers' social development towards school readiness (Hatfield et al., 2016).

Cognitive and non-cognitive school readiness tools

One of the most elaborated school readiness assessment tools that has been standardised psychometrically in Canada is the Early Development Instrument (EDI) by M. Janus and D. Offord (2007). It contains 104 items for the teacher to complete and is a population-based measure to assess the school readiness of kindergartners. Five areas of their development are taken into account: 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social competence; 3) emotional maturity; 4) language and cognitive development; 5) communication skills and general knowledge.

The physical health section includes: a) general physical readiness to start school; b) physical independence; c) established handedness; d) coordination; e) gross motor skills (motion); f) fine motor skills (manipulation).

Social competence includes: a) the ability to cooperate with the peers; b) responsibility for one's own behaviour; c) respect for people – adults, children; d) cognitive curiosity and readiness to explore; e) attitude to learning.

Emotional maturity is a negative section, so the positive results are achieved when there are less unwanted, immature behaviours such as being fearful or aggressive, inattention, hyperactivity.

The three sections above form the non-cognitive part of the school readiness achievement. The next two are the cognitive ones.

Cognitive and language development scale consists of the items related to: a) basic literacy (writing one's own name, knowing a few letters), b) advanced literacy (ability to read and write a few words, etc.), c) basic numeracy (recognizing numbers, ability to count objects and fingers, etc.).

The general knowledge and communication skills EDI section includes: a) story-telling, ability to express one's own needs verbally, socially appropriate way of communication; b) understanding verbal instructions and commands; c) general information and knowledge about the world.

The other school readiness assessment tool with psychometric standardisation has been designed and developed in Poland by A. Frydrychowicz, E. Kozniewska, A. Matuszewski and E. Zwierzynska (2006) as

a part of the bigger set of instruments called The Preschool Teacher's Advisor. The set consists of the School Readiness Scale (SRS) Manual with its psychometric properties and six brochures containing important information related to the main topic, such as: 1) school readiness contexts, 2) play and learning in the group, 3) achieving independence, 4) preschoolers' social skills, 5) reading skills and literacy development and assessment, 6) numeracy development and assessment in 6-year-old children.

The School Readiness Scale is a teacher-completed tool that includes six areas of assessment: a) educational skills; b) cognitive skills; c) motor efficiency; d) self-independence; e) non-conflictuality; f) social activity. There is a 4-point Likert scale based response required for each of 64 items.

Early social and emotional support for the preschoolers

The results of the research indicate that in supporting the development of children from poorer backgrounds and with different resources and experiences towards the emergence of their potential and to help them in achieving school readiness, the crucial matter is related to the authority of the preschool teachers. They are supposed to be sensitive to the developmental changes, focus on the resources of the child, not on their deficits, monitor changes on the basis of the functional dynamic assessment (Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012). The test results also show that the highest efficiency is observed with additional time spent in kindergarten, dedicated directly to the development of social and emotional competence, and not necessarily educational skills (Konarzewski, 2013).

This approach to school readiness also underlines the double readiness issue, including the child's ability to begin their school education and the school's ability to be able to receive children with their individual specific needs. Due to the different experience in every child's life situation, combining with their capacities and their own activities, there is a need to give them the opportunity to start school at the similar

point in their development. The team of A. Brzezinska, J. Matejczuk and A. Nowotnik (2012) has analysed the relation between the types of the social, emotional and cognitive support at an early age (5–7 year old children) and the pupils' readiness to cope with the challenges at the beginning of school education. The authors developed a model of the main areas of this support, based on Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Bee, Boyd, 2009).

According to it, the foundation of every action and vision of the world is the process of building a child's personal resources in the early childhood. This is supposed to give them trust and confidence, initiative and autonomy.

The second level includes providing the tools for understanding social context and the means to cope with difficulties and failures. This refers to the process of building an identity based on cognitive, emotional, moral and social development.

The third level of the support concerns the process of developing competences related to learning such as planning, organizing, monitoring, metacognition.

The last, fourth level of intervention should include the development of specific skills that are necessary for educational tasks and problem solving (for details see Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012).

The authors present a list of eleven competences crucial for school readiness and academic achievements, and these are the ones that could be strongly supported by different programmes of early intervention. The competences include as follows: 1) inhibition, delayed gratification, 2) emotional control leading to self-control, 3) focusing attention despite distractors, 4) readiness and willingness to achieve aims and goals for the price of effort, 5) working memory, 6) ability to establish goals and to make plans, 7) initiating and continuing one's own actions, 8) organizing actions in the spatial arrangement, 9) planning actions in time, 10) flexibility, 11) self-regulation and metacognitive skills.

The role of adults, teachers and parents, in this model, is to formulate tasks and problems so that every child is interested in solving them and engaged in the process of it. This includes the skilful and balanced com-

bination of pleasant and less preferable tasks so that the child is able to connect the rule of pleasure with the rule of reality (Brzezinska, Matejczuk, Nowotnik, 2012).

Another important thing is to provide gratification after the end of each task or action and gradually develop a positive experience from mental effort, not only from play. The support programmes leading to school readiness should be provided as a kind of scaffolding that helps every child to be able to lay the foundations for crucial skills with the aim to gradually get rid of it during the process of development and maturation (Wygotski, 1989).

The date of birth effect on academic achievements

Data analysis of a huge sample of the third grade students (n = 101 519) from 25 European countries, participating in the measurement of the achievements TIMMS 2011, was carried out by K. Konarzewski (2013) with the use of hierarchical regression analysis. This was to assess the impact of the effect of the date of birth on school achievement. In some countries the date of birth effect was not listed. Some observed the opposite effect, with younger children performing better than older, but only when they were compared with the achievements of those whose school education had been delayed. In this context, the researcher proposes focusing on the question of the manner and methods of reducing the differences between the children remaining under the care of one teacher in one branch rather than on the starting age for school education (Konarzewski, 2013).

In other studies (Jablonski, Kleka, 2015), the authors drew attention to the specific factor found in the group of children who were sent to school earlier than they were supposed to. They showed a higher level of fluid intelligence, and their parents had a higher social status. According to the authors, it was this combination that let them achieve higher results rather than the school starting age itself.

The school readiness profiles of emotional and social competences

A profile analysis of the preschoolers' school readiness in the emotional and social dimension revealed four types of children: a) well adapted, b) cognitively competent but aggressive; c) non-aligned cognitively and emotionally immature; d) with multiple risk of disorders in which there are problematic behaviours, hyperactivity and aggressive behaviour (Abenavolli, Greenberg, Bierman, 2017). The authors suggest that early assessment of school readiness towards establishing its profile is crucial for further school success.

Having studied the results of a number of pieces of research, a group of researchers from the Pennsylvania State University, R. Abenavoli, M. Greenberg and K. Bierman (2017) noticed the deficiency and need for the high-risk sample in the contemporary studies on the school readiness.

The team ran a research project on those from a n=301 low-income family background, disadvantaged preschoolers. They measured children's academic ability, learning engagement, social-emotional skills and aggressive-disruptive behaviours which they use in their latent profile analyses (LPA). Teachers completed the Teacher Social Competence Scale. They rated six items related to emotional functioning on a 6-point Likert type scale and seven related to the social skills. The items include the ability to cope with disappointment, calm down after frustration, co-operate, share with others, etc. Aggressive-disruptive behaviours were rated on the similar Likert type scale. They include the estimation of the level of the three negative kinds of actions, such as: a) violent behaviours – fighting with other children, pushing, hitting others, b) conduct problems – cheating, stealing, c) hyperactivity – struggling to wait for turn, interrupting others.

The analysis model let the team establish school readiness latent profiles. The first profile, explained by 42% of the sample, has been consisted of well-adjusted preschoolers who were rated by their teachers as cognitively and non-cognitively ready to begin their school education. Their levels of literacy, mathematical ability, school engagement, learning behaviours, attention, emotional regulation and pro-social behaviours

were high enough to start school and the levels of aggressive behaviours, conduct problems and hyperactivity was low (Abenavoli, Greenberg, Bierman, 2017).

The second profile, formed by 19% of the sample, consisted of children who were rated as cognitively compliant and competent to start school but emotionally not quite ready to do so. They were characterized by high levels of literacy and mathematical ability, a lower level of school engagement, learning behaviours, attention, and emotional regulation and pro-social behaviours below the mean. They presented some aggressive behaviours, as well as minor conduct problems. Their average level of hyperactivity was higher than in the first profile.

The third group, consisting of 22% of the subjects, was formed by children described as academically not well engaged in educational tasks, including basic literacy, numeracy, but they had ability to memorize and focus their attention long enough to be able to solve the problem or answer the teacher's question. Their levels of cognitive skills were below the mean and the levels of the aggressive-disruptive behaviours were slightly above the mean for the sample.

The last group, including 17% of the children, represented the multi-risk profile that meant presenting the most negative behaviours in the teachers' ratings. Their profile was striking in its high levels of aggressive behaviours, conduct problems and hyperactivity. Those three negative dimensions were much higher in this group compared with others.

Preschoolers' executive functions in the school readiness assessment

Current research takes into account the measurement of the preschoolers' executive functions in the process of the assessment of school readiness. This is based on the results showing the strong correlation between child's self-restriction from the immediate gratification as an important predictor of success in life and the academic achievements (Goleman, 1997; Fitzpatrick et al., 2014; Baptista et al, 2016).

The origin and source of these interests comes from the experiment run by W. Mischel and E. Ebbesen in the 1960's at Stanford University, known as the "marshmallow test" (Mischel, 1961; Mischel, Shoda, Rodrigues, 1989). The aim of the study was to assess delayed gratification and its development in the kindergartners. The participants were over 600 children from the nursery schools at the mean age of 54 months, or 4 years and 6 months on the average. Every participant was invited to a room with a marshmallow on the table. There was a possibility, mentioned in the instruction, either to eat the treat straightaway or to wait fifteen minutes without eating with the promise of receiving the second one as a reward for the patience.

Most children attempted the delay but only in 33% of them was it long enough to receive the reward. A minority of the subjects decided to eat the sweet immediately. Delayed gratification time length was strongly related to the age of the kindergartners, the older they were, the longer they were able to wait.

Later, in the 1980's, W. Mischel ran follow-up studies with the same group of children but who were now much older. He found correlations between the results of the delayed gratification experiment and participants' academic achievements. There had been also some modified experiments run on preschoolers with the use of go/not go tasks later, showing correlations between the age and inhibitory control ability (Mischel, Shoda, Rodriges, 1989).

The relatively recent neuroimaging research, on the original participants from the first edition of the experiment at Stanford, indicated the prefrontal cortex activation differences between high and low delayers of gratification (Eigste et al., 2006; Casey et al., 2011).

One of the directions of the current studies on the school readiness competences focuses on the preschoolers' executive function level as a variable that can explain the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014). The authors suggest implementing specific programmes in preschools that could effectively enrich executive function skills such as inhibition, emotion control, delayed gratification, working memory, ability to shift. The Montessori curriculum is

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highly recommended for such programmes. Another trend in the study on school readiness, including executive functions, is to explain the relation between them and students' academic readiness and their further achievements (Baptista et al., 2016). Executive functions allow for the conscious and goal-set control of thoughts and behaviours in our life, starting from an early age. The results of the recent research led by the team of J. Baptista and her colleagues (2016) have shown that the preschoolers' social adjustment was linked to their academic readiness as a mediator between the early educational skills and executive functions. This leads to the conclusion that there is the need to strengthen children's capacities to manage their acting in a socially appropriate way so that they would be more mature and ready to succeed at school.

Conclusions

School readiness is one of the most crucial developmentally based achievements of 6-year-old children. It is vital for teachers and educators to be able to assess its aspects and correlates in many dimensions so that the picture of the child would be comprehensive and holistic. There are three ways to do so: a) teacher report, b) parent rating, c) direct child assessment. The best results can be obtained only by using the combination of those three but from the economic point of view, in practice, rating scales are in use more often than direct assessments. The teachers ordinarily will not use direct assessment unless the child needs a specific decision to be undertaken related to a) the consideration to start school earlier than the peers, b) demonstration of unsocial troublesome behaviours, c) the requirement to implement an early support programme to their education.

After many types of analyses and observations, the statement both for the educators and the researchers is clear and consistent. Regardless of the method of data gathering, school readiness concerns not only educational skills, although they are vital, but also the emotional and social skills allowing the pupils to gain success in academic and non-academic areas of their lives (Goleman, 1997).

The social and emotional competence profiles of the preschoolers' school readiness, as well as the lists of skills related to direct and indirect assessment, indicate the compound character of the child's social-emotional functioning and the role these dimensions play in the process of school achievements alongside cognitive skills.

In many current studies on school readiness one can see the deep care and concern of the adults engaged and responsible for the child's early development. The main aim is to provide satisfying and equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their social background and individual experience.

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Selected Aspects of Diagnosis and Bibliotherapy in a Child Education

ARTICLES

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Diagnosis as the Foundation of Early Pedagogical Help for Children in Kindergarten

Abstract: This publication is devoted to the issue of pre-diagnosis and its role in the early detection of problems / delays / disharmony or developmental disorders in children at this age. Preschool diagnosis, supported by observation, is often the first study on the basis of which the regularity or irregularity of a child's development can be stated. It is the duty of teachers in relation to the results of this diagnosis to take action to support the development of a child diagnosed with problems / delays / disharmony and disorder in order to reduce them. Early diagnosis and, consequently, early action enable one to avoid deepening the problems / disorders / disharmony or delays, and allow the child to function in the family and society.

Keywords: disturbance, difficulty, diagnosis, development support, quasi-experiment.

Introduction

In pedagogy, diagnosis is seen as the basis of all pedagogical activities and the condition of rational actions. It is used in direct educational, corrective, compensatory, therapeutic, preventive and resocialisation acivities, but also in pedagogical counseling, expert advice and in organizing animation activities. In practice, pedagogy is largely the basis for decisions about the direction, the conditions and measurement of activity on

people, phenomena and processes (Jarosz, 2006: 11). According to Ewa Górniewicz (2000: 83) pedagogical diagnosis covering the area of education is a recognition of multifrequency and usually involves determining the symptoms of problems, determining the level of represented skills, establishing the area of school failures and the functioning of the school environment (here pre-school) and developing optimisation advice.

The diagnosis is the basis for the planning of care and assistance and planning support interactions. It is an essential link in this system, as it is used to identify difficulties and its results allow one to provide early intervention (e.g. E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska 2009, 2011, 2014; S. A. Włoch 2009; A. I. Brzezinska 2005, 2009; B. Cytowska 2006; B. Skałbania 2009, 2011). According to Joanna Kruk-Lasocka (2011: 170), more and more children indicate abnormal/developmental delays, such as hyperkinetic disorder, clumsiness, delayed speech development, sensory integration dysfunction and the risk of social maladjustment. Most children who attend pre-school need a diagnosis in order to identify their needs, identify possible difficulties and the action necessary to support their development. Hence, pre-school teachers are obliged to diagnose children as early as possible to identify any abnormalities or difficulties in their development. Actions taken on the basis of these findings provide optimal support for the development and also take into account capabilities, needs and interests.

The problem of diagnosis in light of the analysis of literature

The term *diagnosis* is derived from Greek and means distinction, judgment, identification. Originally it was associated with the medical sciences and identified with a pathological state of the organism. With time it has come to be a general term for the state of health of the person (Jarosz, 2006: 17). Mostly, however, it means the recognition of objects, people, situations, events or phenomena in order to provide the most accurate information and prepare actions to bring about improvement. Thus, in a general sense, one can call diagnosis the identification of the state of

things, the development of trends on the basis of symptoms and based on the knowledge of general regularities in the field (Jarosz, 2006: 18).

The complex structure of diagnosis is presented by Stefan Ziemski (1973). According to him, diagnosis is (…) *identification based on observed symptoms and the well-known general truths of the subject by assigning them to type or species, further explanation of the genetic and cellular, determined by its current phase and predicted development*.

According to this definition, a diagnosis which explains a series of problems concerning the state of the subject consists of several partial diagnoses. These include diagnosis identification (*typology, classification*) genetic diagnosis (*causal, reason*), the importance of diagnosis (*teleological*), the diagnosis phase, which indicates the stage of development of the subject to diagnosis and prognostic diagnosis (*developmental*).

Pedagogy emphasizes the need and importance of implementing all of these types of partial diagnoses. Barbara Skałbania (2011: 21), however, draws attention to the fact that the pedagogical diagnosis does not feature in all these types of partial diagnoses. It stresses that typological, genetic and prognostic diagnosis usually takes place – postulating the nature of help. The need for genetic diagnosis *(in other words: causal)* results from the need to determine the cause of the finding, which allows one to program pedagogical therapy focused on the cause, not the symptoms. Using a comprehensive diagnosis which, apart from saying how and why this happens, allows one to assess the current stage of development of the phenomenon and develop forecasts as to its further development with a proposal for remedial and therapeutic steps.

The concept of diagnosis functioned for many centuries on the basis of that which had developed from medicine. With the passage of time it became popular and was used in many other areas, e.g. social sciences – sociology, psychology, philosophy, pedagogy.

It was introduced to social scientists in 1917 by Mary Ellen (M. Guziuk-Tkacz, 2011: 16–17), author of the fundamental work *Social Diagnosis*, which moved principles of medical – psychiatric and psychological diagnosis (referred to as "the study of the soul") into social work. Expanded in this way, the scope of the concepts describes the process of identification

of all individual states on the basis of general state of development and bio-mental regularities.

The Polish concept of the idea of pedagogy and the idea of the need for diagnosis was propagated by Janusz Korczak and Helena Radlińska. J. Korczak (Korczak, 1993: 361) outlined that if the pedagogy, medicine model was to effectively operate in reality, and particularly help in solving different educational problems and difficulties appearing in the patient, it needed to develop a pedagogical diagnosis based on the symptoms. He stressed: "As is a fever, a cough, vomiting to the physician, so is a smile, a tear or a blush to the pedagogue. There are no irrelevant symptoms. You need to record and reflect on everything, reject the random, combine the related, to seek the underlying matter" (Korczak, 1919: 3). He proposed a model pedagogue – intelligent, ambitious with the attitude of a medical researcher – applying scientific ways of knowing a child, of which he considered the most important to be observation. The basic principle in pedagogy for Korczak was the knowledge of the child while at the same time emphasizing the need to recognize the teacher's capabilities.

Basing diagnostic pedagogy on medicine, he recommended: exploring independently and separately every fact during the diagnostic process; educational and social environment of students; both the child and the group of children (in a variety of environments and pedagogical situations); areas of meaning of speech of children, when words and statements have a completely different meaning than in the case of an adult, and a child's creations (Guziuk-Tkacz, 2011: 09).

Referring to Lisowska (2003: 58–59), it should be added that Korczak recommended that the diagnostician connects together two models of diagnosis – the study of general regularities and individual cases, the researches kept distant from each other and to the subject and object of research. It was also suggested using a method of natural experiment and an interview technique and observation, as well as reference to scientific knowledge, but "its findings were to be verified by experience."

The theory of clinical diagnosis – pedagogy of J. Korczak is embedded in the mainstream of personalistic pedagogy, which emphasises reciprocal action by the pedagogue and pupil, as actors and partners. A person-

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alistic look at the teacher provides many opportunities for interaction on the patient, not limiting them to commonly known and used techniques and pedagogical methods. Personal characteristics and skills determine the choice of pupil path, which takes into account the subjectivity of the patient, not treating it instrumentally or directly (Śliwerski, 2005: 87–88). Thus, according to J. Korczak the diagnostic procedures should include two stages – the first relies on knowledge and understanding of the child; the second – associated with self-diagnosis of the investigator – know yourself before you want to know the children (Korczak, 1957: 126).

On the other hand, H. Radlińska (Jarosz, 2006: 126) formulated the idea of pedagogical diagnosis denoting the study of the social environment, suspecting the causes of problems and failures. She underlined the important role of genetic diagnosis, the purpose of which was to explain the causes of phenomena and their conditions, especially environmental. Diagnostic significance was chosen to explain the symptoms and characteristics of the whole of the studied phenomenon. An enriched concept of measuring the environment of concepts was introduced: medium (which attributed the highest diagnostic value), standards (to determine the conditions for the proper development of the individual), pattern – as the general standards, index, and in particular the overall rate environment, meaning symptom, a symptom of the problem being studied and meter which considered numerical strength indicator (Guziuk-Tkacz, 2011: 111). Also, enriched diag-nostic tests with a clear directive were implemented – research questions to which answers must be sought as a result of the diagnostic tests. E. Mazurkiewicz (1983: 115–116), in line with the idea of diagnosis by Radlińska, asks the following questions: Identify what you need to do. What should I do? What is possible to do? What forces are human? What other resources might be available? H. Radlińska has focused in this way on the social diagnosis to prevention, compensation and on support for individual and social group.

The multi-faceted process of diagnosis plays a special role in pedagogical diagnosis, which is the basis for planning the forms of corrective – compensatory work as well as programming the therapy process. Its focus are the failures and difficulties and development of the child. The aim is to

describe, to explain and to predict the course of events and manage them. It also aims to define the scope and possibilities of pedagogical activities – pedagogical, compensatory, corrective and / or preventive in relation to pupils. It is also plans interventions that will enable your child to see not through the prism of its deficit, but its opportunities.

Stanisława Włoch and Agnieszka Włoch (2009: 114) state that the pedagogical diagnosis is based on recognizing ability, deviations from development, the pace and rhythm of the child and determining the difficulties and consequences of developmental abnormalities in terms of the efficiency of manual, visual and auditory perception and mental functions. They point out that the diagnosis should pay attention to the dynamics of development, which can be varied in different periods of life. This diversity may result from acceleration or inhibition, or even withdrawal due to various factors – biological, environmental, or lack of stimulation. Therefore, pedagogical diagnosis determines the state of development of the child's skills and qualities of behavior.

The essence of diagnosis in pedagogy can therefore be recognized as "a description of the results of the examination referred to as a snapshot of pedagogical reality made on the basis of data collected and evaluated from various sources, which includes a complex description of the current state, explains its origins or reasons, explains its meaning and determines the stage of its development as well as an assessment of opportunities to change things or to maintain a desired direction pedagogically" (Jarosz, 2006: 23).

Pedagogical diagnosis is part of an overall procedure which includes the past, or the aforementioned genetic diagnosis, present – and the future of the diagnosis phase, which involves the predictive diagnosis, and development. Focus only on the current state (as it is now) does not bring a solution and does not allow for the design of assistance, because it brings only a fragmentary assessment of events and facts resulting from specific circumstances and relationships (symptomatic diagnosis). In pedagogical work an important role, therefore, is played by diagnosis: developmental and causal, indicating the source of problems and disturbances and trends (Skałbania, 2011: 26).

It can therefore be concluded that the task of pedagogical diagnosis is to reach the right solution to a given problem associated with the processes of upbringing, education, social support, assistance and care by detecting its causes and defining the scope, dynamics and development forecasts.

Close to the concept of "diagnosis" is the term *diagnostics*. The dictionary defines this as the area of medicine dealing with the diagnosis of diseases on the basis of interviews, medical examination, analysis of symptoms and laboratory tests. For the purposes of the social sciences it has been implemented as a synonym for the theory or even the science of professionally conducted diagnosis. In this perspective, professionally guided diagnosis is treated as collection, aggregation and modelling of information about its subject and object. It is an essential base for the evaluation of the proper functioning of individuals or groups at different stages of their lives – in a variety of psychosocial situations (Guziuk- -Tkacz, 2011: 17).

Diagnostics covers preliminaries and monitoring. Initial diagnosis is aimed at gaining a broader knowledge about the child, taking into account the psycho-physical capabilities and individual needs and pedagogical development. Monitoring is in turn a series of steps aimed to assess the effectiveness of measures taken and aimed at planning further supportive measures. The next step is to determine the causes of developmental disorders – pedagogical, developmental forecasts and identification of special educational needs including adapting the environment to the needs of the child. The accuracy of determining the cause and development will depend on clarification of needs and planning support in the preschool.

Jerzy Apanowicz (2005: 42) understood the concept of diagnostic tests as those which aimed to obtain reliable information, find the true facts and events, fact finding, detecting the actual relationships between phenomena and processes.

B. Skałbania (2011: 23), referring to L. Pytka, states that the structure of the diagnostic process includes three types of diagnostic activities, which are: determining the object of the diagnosis (conceptualisation),

the choice of methods and diagnostic techniques (organising), the application of research methods and techniques (implementation). The diagnosis starts, therefore, with a series of steps: identification of the objective of selecting an appropriate theoretical concept, the choice of technology resulting from the adoption of the concept, the practical application of research techniques and the interpretation of the empirical diagnosis material collected.

It follows that, as confirmed by Władysław J. Paluchowski (2001: 62), diagnostics is a complex problem-solving process, involving the processing of data, not a record of behavior. Knowledge used in the explanation is not only based on perception, but it requires thinking and reasoning. Diagnostics is, therefore, a complex activity, because on the basis of external signs one has to deduce the internal state of the object of study – institutions, a living organism, the state of mental functions, and social adaptability (Jarosz, 2006: 18). The complexity of the diagnostic process is emphasized by Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka (Skałbania, 2011: 17): "diagnostics are complex activities that require a lot of skill and competence, from which one deduces the internal (non-observable directly) state as based on externally observable manifestations (symptoms) – the person and their mental functions, institutions, social or hidden attributes of certain phenomena."

In conclusion, the entire diagnostic process, based not only on theoretical knowledge and skills of the teachers, but also on practical actions that are taken by them, should lead to knowledge of the child. This knowledge should be comprehensive, because only such knowledge enables one to provide reliable support. Thus, the diagnostic process cannot focus only on the child, but should also lead to the knowledge of the entire life situation of the child's functioning in the family and in the environment. The familial – social context constitutes an important element of the diagnostic process and allows for multilateral understanding of the child. Omission of one of these aspects may result in an incorrect diagnosis of the causes of the diagnosed problems and thus lead to erroneous or incomplete therapeutic process.

Methodological studies

It should be assumed that diagnosis is the result of actions taken in connection with the need to know and understand the person, phenomenon or event. It is made with a specific purpose and it is important to determine who may perform it, using what methods and in what conditions, at what time and in what place. The execution of operations in accordance with the procedure adopted should lead to providing accurate answers to the question formulated and allow the solution to the problem (Czeglik, 2010: 36–37).

The object of the study was diagnosis as a basis for pedagogical help for children in preschool. One of the general objectives included characterization undertaken by teachers in nursery activities, taking into account the results of the diagnosis and attempt to diagnose the effectiveness of these actions in assisting the development of children. The detailed objectives include: determining the kind of difficulties occurring in various spheres of development of the child, determining their causes and determining to what extent the results of the diagnosis are used in the support of activities undertaken.

The study also adopted the hypothesis which assumed that the longer the child attended preschool, the higher the level of socio – emotional, motor and cognitive development, and therefore readiness to take schooling. The dependent variable concerned the length of stay in the preschool and the independent variable level of socio – emotional, motor and cognitive development. Accepted indicators relate the level of socio – emotional development to the level of independence of the child and its functioning in the group; the level of motor development, where physical fitness and manual dexterity were studied; the level of cognitive development, which concerned speech, visual perception, auditory memory and attention span, and mathematical reasoning. Also taken into account was the general knowledge of the child, including the knowledge of address, seasons and days of the week (given in the correct order), atmospheric phenomena characteristic of the seasons, or the conditions in which developing plants and animals were checked.

Comparative studies included selected in-time analysis of factual mate-rial in two groups of children aged 5. Children in one group (experimen-tal) attended preschool for the first time and the second had been attending it for at least of 2 years.

One of the methods used for the test was a quasi experiment method. The technique chosen was one group technique and a factor in an exper-imental supportive-corrective program. Studies conducted in the exper-imental group included a preliminary diagnosis of preschool, on the basis of the results of the supportive-corrective programme and measuring changes under its influence in such a way as to make it possible to com-pare the original state with the final state. Comparing the states was in-tended to serve the final diagnosis. The purpose of the chosen meth-ods and techniques as well as the experimental factor was to prove that properly conducted diagnosis and early supportive actions contribute to reducing the difficulties diagnosed/disharmony, delays or disorders.

Preschool Diagnosis and the Supportive-Corrective Program

To achieve the intended effects of quasi experiment one should em-phasize the importance of detailed and correctly carried out initial diag-nosis, the role of the implemented program and intensive work by the teacher designed to compensate for disharmony, delays and to support the development of children. The high scores that they achieved com-pared to the initial diagnosis are also proof that systematic work gives children a chance to the redress of the level of development in different areas and the acquisition and improvement of skills.

The possibility to implement support interactions is also an oppor-tunity to minimize failure in children, working with them on effective ways of coping with difficulties and overcoming them and preventing secondary consequences of the failure to adopt these measures. The negative effects of their omission focus primarily on the emotional sphere of children, leading to an underestimation of self-esteem, capabilities and skills.

The group using quasi experiment consisted of 18 children aged 5, who were attending preschool for the first time. The preschool which they attended was located in a small rural primary school where there were slightly more than 100 students, including the two branches of the preschool. Since they were children attending preschool for the first time, many of them may have acquired the knowledge and skills which they should have attained sooner. The low level of preparedness of children to take up a new role has caused a lot of difficulties and problems. It also contributed to the very low results which they achieved in the initial diagnosis.

These included, among others, the level of self-control; in the experimental group four children were rated B[2], twelve at C and two children were evaluated at D. The level of manual ability in four children was rated B, ten at C and four, D. The level of motor development was also low – three children reached level B, twelve level C, and three level D. Particularly disturbing was the level of speech development because as many as twelve children pronounced sounds incorrectly – level D, which was refelcted in the quality of their speech. Also very low was the level of children's ability to analyze and synthesize auditory cues. Eighteen children were graded D, four did not perform vocal analysis and synthesis – level D, ten did not distinguish phonemes – level D. The other children were rated at level C in these skills. The children achieved a slightly higher performance in visual perception – two at level A, six at level B, seven at level C and three at level D.

The alarmingly low results of the diagnosis resulted in the development and implementation of the supportive-correction programme for

[2] A – the child individually / carefully / accurately / precisely / efficiently / correctly performs a specific activity indicator, their actions indicate that the tested skill is fully formed; B – the child independently performs a specific activity indicator, committing single / insignificant / minor / small errors; their actions indicate that the skill tested should improve; C – the child tries to perform a task independently or expects support / performs imprecisely / inaccurately / irregularly / makes mistakes, their actions indicate that the tested skill is in the developmental phase and needs to be developed; D – the child does not take specific actions on their own or with the help of the teacher or performs tasks incorrectly, their actions indicate that the tested skill is not yet present.

the whole group, in which the adopted assumptions, including implementation of children's social life by participating in the festivities planned by the preschool, increasing their self-esteem and self-actualization, increasing the pace of work, shaping and developing manual skills, and visual and auditory perception. The program also included exercises to develop thinking, mobility, orientation in space and of the body.

Its purpose was to support the development of children in terms of diagnosed disorders, difficulties and disharmony. The process of support took place during group, team and individual work. In terms of socio – emotional development, in particular, it focused on developing self-service skills, emotional development, implementation of the social life in direct contact with the environment and acquiring and expanding knowledge about the surrounding world. The aim of the programme in this regard was to teach children self-reliance, developing in them a sense of agency, security and accountability. Socialization also focused on motivating them to make independent decisions and actions, enabling them to reassure themselves and raise self-esteem.

In terms of motor development (small motor skills) the focus was on exercise and fitness. The purpose of these exercises was to improve the efficiency of such children to be reasonably well able to deal with activities that require the performance of small, precise hand movements. Exercise of the main motor skills include improving their overall efficiency and motor and audio-visual coordination.

In the field of cognitive development emphasis on the awakening of cognitive curiosity of children, developing an attitude of an active researcher, learning through experience and encouraging activity of their own. Children organized situations that supported positive experiences, provoked into action and naming what they were doing and with what aim, offered an opportunity to determine what came before, what is now and what will be, helped anticipate – cause, develop curiosity and the ability to attentively listening to stories, fairy tales and poems and then to speak about them. Emphasis was placed on the development of thinking, including thinking about cause – effect and mathematical reasoning.

Learning poems by heart was a way to develop memory and attention, as well as shaping the culture of the language of children. "Memorising poems asks children to listen carefully and speak with concern about the clarity and beauty of the spoken word" (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska&Zielińska, 2014: 149). In terms of supporting the development of speech, vocabulary enrichment and the development of skills of correct speech, reference was made also to the daily reading of fairy tales and stories.

To work with children the following methods were used: *Educational Kinesiology* according to P. Dennison (2000), *Good Start* by Marta Bogdanowicz (2008), *Developmental Movement* by W. Sherborne (2002), *Children Learn Bears Rhymes*, the *Rhythmic Organisation of Time* by E. Gruszczyk--Kolczyńska (1977, 2005), *Methods and Techniques of Activation* (Adamek, 2007), formative assessment, behavioral and socio-therapeutic work. Children used their own materials prepared on the basis of the instructions contained in the cited literature and educational games by publishers *Alexander, Adamigo, Granna* and *Epideixis.*

In order to correct speech defects, the children attended classes with a speech therapist and children who required it were guaranteed psychological – pedagogical assistance. Two children were referred to specialist clinics. Parents were also informed of the results of observation and diagnosis and the introduction of the programme, and were asked to cooperate, because without their support it would be difficult to achieve some of the goals.

The program was implemented from November 2015 to the end of March 2016, according to the prepared schedule. Classes in maintaining the distribution of time included in the Core Curriculum were carried out three times a week for half an hour. In addition, each day the children participated in games aimed at helping them develop. All classes were conducted in the form of a playgroup that effectively engaged children and aroused their curiosity. Children also had free access to teaching aids and could use them independently in any way modifying the previously known fun or exercise. Children were also involved in numerous competitions, performances and demonstrations. They participated in numerous trips.

The results achieved in the framework of the implemented programme

The pre-diagnosis carried out with the group served early detection of problems / delays / disharmony and disorder. It allowed to capture the disturbing behavior that could be symptomatic of problems / delays / disharmony and disorder. It also allowed one to determine their type in specific areas of mental and physical development and to target assistance.

The results of the final diagnosis, carried out in April after five months of work based on the program, were much higher than those the children reached in the initial diagnosis. Comparing them resulted in the discovery that after the implementation of supporting exercises in the field of self-service and self-reliance, the children began to dress and undress, remember to prepare and organize jobs, started operations and led them to the end, a few learned to tie their shoes. The results of the final diagnosis in this area were nine children at level A, six at level B and three at level C.

In some areas as such as dexterity, they were fully developed or required only some improvement. While two children remained at level D, three children achieved level A and thriteen level B. It was a big achievement, because the results of the initial diagnosis showed that this ability in the children was only in the phase of shaping or even nil. Also in the field of motor development the children made progress. Fourteen achieved level A, two level B, and two level C. Based on the results of the initial diagnosis it was found that their motor development was in the phase of shaping and one had to develop it. Several children did not take action in this area alone nor need the help of a teacher. Regular exercise and access to a gym allowed them to shape their efficiency and agility. In some cases, it required only improvement.

A summary of results of visual and auditory perception also confirmed the effectiveness of the the program of exercises. The results of the final diagnosis justified the expediency of their selection. These skills, which did not occur or were only in the formative phase in the children diagnosed have, as a result of systematic work, been fully formed or

perfected. In individual cases, they were only in the stage of formation and children concerned were diagnosed with developmental disorders. Thus, in terms of visual perception, twelve children achieved level A, four achieved level B and two, level C. In terms of auditory perception eleven children achieved level A, four, level B and three, level C. The children at level C were diagnosed as having developmental disorders.

A comparison of the results in terms of cognitive development has allowed one to establish that the children correctly or with slight errors completed the task on the basis of having heard the text, united cause and effect, read back the information communicated through symbols, justified their choices, they operated with a richer vocabulary, began to build the correct expressions and solved logical tasks. Also, intensive therapy conducted by a speech therapist yielded results. Six children in this area were assessed at level A, seven level B, four at level D and one child, who during the school year was diagnosed with motor aphasia, level D.

The results confirm the need for pre-diagnosis. The time when a child is in preschool is the moment where any irregularities in their develop-ment, which bear the hallmarks of disorders and require specialized assistance and therapy, can be spotted. Thanks to it we can help children in their development and enable them to properly start another stage of education.

Results with respect to the hypotheses

The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis that the longer the child attends preschool, the higher the level of socio-emotional, motor and cognitive development, and thus preparedness to take schooling.

The results of the initial diagnosis showed that analysis of the results of the diagnosis of the five year olds who went to preschool for more than a year helped confirm the assumptions of the adopted hypothesis. These children have already achieved high results in the initial diagnosis and

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thus showed a higher level of social – emotional, cognitive and motor development, and were better prepared to join the school.

A detailed breakdown of the preliminary diagnosis results for the whole group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average group performance achieved in the initial diagnosis

Preliminary diagnosis	Physical and motor development	Independence	Manual dexterity	Social and emotional development	Knowledge about social and natural environment	Speech	Visual perception	Auditory perception	Intellectual development with mathematical concepts	Understanding symbols
Number of points per child	8 pts.	6 pts.	12 pts.	20 pts.	12 pts.	16 pts.	12 pts.	14 pts.	26 pts.	4 pts.
group average (number of children in the group 20)	7,65 pts.	5,9 pts.	11,75 pts.	18,5 pts.	10,85 pts.	14,65 pts.	11,55 pts.	12,6 pts.	23,95 pts.	3,95 pts.

Source: study based on empirical analysis of the collected material

As can be seen in the table, the group achieved high scores with respect to the scale, in each of the abovementioned skills / spheres. The results of the diagnosis confirm the hypothesis that children who are attending for more than one year (two or three years) are significantly better prepared for school than children attending preschool for one year only. This is because they have more time not only to learn and acquire the aforementioned skills, but also to consolidate and use them in practice. This automatically influences their better preparation for school and better start in it, and then on the results achieved in the later years of learning. As the research by K. Dutkiewicz (Wilgocka-Okoń, 2011: 21) shows, children who have achieved high levels of school readiness have also achieved full or partial school success.

In turn, analysis of the results of diagnosis in 5-year old children in the (*experimental*) group, which went to preschool for the first time, and, as 5-year-olds, were required to undergo one year preschool preparation,

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revealed that these children are deprived of a number of skills and their social – emotional, cognitive and motor development is poor. Children in the experimental group, in spite of the visible effects of support and favorable results of the final diagnosis, did not achieve as high results as the children who had been attending the preschool for more than a year, even in the final diagnosis. Thus they did not achieve readiness to take schooling or their willingness was low. At the same time, the results of the research have shown that properly conducted diagnosis and support provided on the basis of the results (creation and implementation of the supportive-correction programme), yielded the desired results and served to reduce observed and diagnosed problems, and improve the acquisition of skills.

Hence the conclusion is that the one year compulsory preschool preparation is too short to prepare children to take compulsory education. Children present low levels of development in these areas, and this in turn translates into a low level of school readiness or lack thereof.

Conclusions

The purpose of corrective actions should be to support the child in its development and trigger potential by eliminating omissions and deficiencies. The effects can be achieved if and only if the repair program/therapy is prepared on the basis of a properly developed diagnosis. The diagnosis gives direction to therapy, because it shows the child's development, functions or processes that are neglected and possible gaps in knowledge and skills (Włoch and Włoch, 2009: 119–120).

Good organization of the assistance process and skillful planning of each of its stages, which take into account the abilities of the child, guarantee success. Throughout the support process, it should be kept in mind that the essential element is the orientation of a child's development in accordance with its inherent potential and developmental possibilities. An important element is also to motivate a child to try to overcome the difficulties surrounding their acceptance, support and mobilization

for further work by showing the joy of each and every success, even the smallest. This success is often repaid with great effort, sometimes disproportionate to the results. Please note that the positive person working with the child and their belief in progress is a measure of the success of any operation aimed at supporting its development.

The whole process of support, starting from the observation of children, performing diagnostics, performance analysis and implementation on the basis of supporting activities, also requires a very large contribution from teachers, as well as their effort and commitment and thus their knowledge, skills and experience are vital.

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The Psychological, Ethical and Socializing Dimension of Childchood Autism During Preschool and Early School

Abstract: Autism is a disorder that becomes today the subject of many interdisciplinary studies. You can talk about a wide spectrum of autism. It concerns adults, but also children. In the article special attention is paid to autism during preschool and early school age. It should be noted that the term "autism" has quite a short history as it appeared in the 40's of the twentieth century. This concept can be understood in three main areas: 1) breaking social ties or limited ability to enter into interpersonal relationships; 2) abnormal communication; 3) stiffness of behaviour, restricted repertoire of activities and interests that do not require much imagination. Another element of the article is the presentation of the core symptoms of autism. It is worth noting that autism is reflected by the diversity of its syndromes. It is important to pay special attention to autism. The specificity of childhood autism must be taken into account in the selection of methods, situations and psychotherapeutic techniques. The point is that the effectiveness of the therapy does not undermine the fundamental norms and moral principles. One of the basic principles is the trust and respecting professional secrecy.
In this context, there is a very important proposal for the therapists and other professionals working with autistic children to constantly work on raising not only professional skills, but also care about raising the moral qualifications.

Keywords: autism, autism symptoms, trust, professional secrecy, treatment of autism.

Introduction

In modern times, the problem of childhood autism has become not only the object of scientific reflection in the context of the creation of new theories and concepts, but it has also given a creative impulse to the development of modern techniques and practical methods of helping children and their families cope with the effects of autism. Autism as a new, diagnosed phenomenon has been the subject of many scientific fields and disciplines since the middle of the twentieth century. Some types of autism have been differentiated, and special attention was drawn to childhood autism. An interesting element which has found a place in this publication is a problem with the symptoms of autism and equally important are some of the significant terms for autism. Autism affects quite a large group of children and the fact that the level of understanding of the issues related to children's autism has recently significantly increased is encouraging.

However, an important issue for this article is the problem of the ethical and psychological aspects of the treatment of children with autism. Given the difficulties of an autistic child in the field of social communication disorder, the therapist must demonstrate a high degree of professional competence in many fields of knowledge and no less important are their ethical and moral qualifications. Working with an autistic child requires patience, a systematic approach, empathy, emotional syntony, as well as consistency in psychotherapeutical actions. An important moral factor also includes constant shaping of the attitude of trust in interpersonal relationships between the psychotherapist and the autistic child. This professional relationship should not only have a competence based character, but also a personal one. The autistic child must have a clear conviction that he or she is a valuable person, worthy of trust and respect. The process of the socialization of an autistic child gains a particular dimension and importance in this light.

The concept of autism

The term "autism" was introduced to the scientific literature in 1943 by Leo Kanner (1943 p. 217–250). This concept is derived from the Greek word *autos*, meaning "alone." Kanner said that this could be called "early infantile autism" but it caused a lot of confusion. The concept of autism was in fact known in psychiatry before: in 1911, Eugen Bleuler applied this term in relation to the axial symptom of schizophrenia, which consists of closing up in one's own world and easing the discipline of logical thinking. "The use of the term by Kanner prompted the associations with schizophrenia, which meant that the newly described syndrome was considered to be one of its forms. Yet autism within the Kenner meaning refers to emotional disorders in early childhood"[3].

Autism as a highly complex phenomenon encompasses three areas of development:

- rupture of social ties or limited ability to enter into interpersonal relationships;
- disturbances in communication;
- stiffness of behaviour, restricted repertoire of activities and interests that do not require much imagination (Pisula 2014, p. 10).

Children with autism suffer greatly and the source of their suffering is a great fear of contact with the outside world. They escape into their own world which is inaccessible to us. Autistic children, as if under a magic spell, hide in their anxiety. "They prefer to cut off themselves off from their environment, which is a source of constant stimuli, which they cannot skilfully select"[4].

The process of recovery from autism is very complex and long, with failures interspersed with success. This is a great test for parents and therapists of children with autism yet there is a hope that there will be a reward

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[3] autystyczni.pl, access, 2016-03-25.

[4] autystyczni.pl, access, 2016-03-25.

for the complete renunciation of working with an autistic child and that it will help them break their social isolation and achieve a significant improvement of functioning in their environment. Infantile autism is one of the most enigmatic disorders of psychological development and covers all areas of the functioning of the child. We can speak of autism when its characteristics occur before 36 months of age – impaired social interaction, abnormal development of communication skills, poor range of interests and activities (Pisula 2010, p. 10).

The consequence of these misunderstandings is the ambiguous understanding of the term autism. M. Mahler believes that autism is a normal phase of development and in the theory of J. Piaget, autism is considered the primary phase of development, characterized by an imbalance of assimilation and accommodation. It is used in different formulations of a prepositional character, such as autistic relationship, autistic defence, autistic behaviour, autistic world, autistic thinking, autistic life.[5]

E. Pisula (2010 p. 13–14) mentions some terms relating to autism:

- Classic autism / Kanner syndrome, these two terms should be regarded as a historical notion, because they differ from the modern understanding of this phenomenon; they focus primarily on the difficulties in social development and the complete lack of speaking skills.
- Early infantile autism. This term also comes from Kanner, it suggests a very early appearance of symptoms during the child's development.
- Autistic features/trends/behaviours. This term is frequently used by diagnosticians who have problems with making an accurate diagnosis of autism. This concept also appears in works of a scientific nature. It is an expression of dimensional understanding of autism, in which the autistic features are a continuum, and disorder highly correlates with their large intensity.

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[5] autystyczni.pl, access, 2016-03-25.

- Child autism. Critics of this concept claim that the suggestion that autism occurs only in childhood is wrong. In fact, for the vast majority of people, it is a lifelong disorder.
- Disorder with autism spectrum. It is a unit included in the DSM-V APA classification.
- Unusual autism. In this type there are no disturbances in at least one of the three axial dimensions, or it relates to the timing of the characteristic symptoms.
- The high-functioning person with autism. This applies to 25–30% of people with autism who have well-developed intellectual abilities.
- A low-functioning person with autism. In such people autism coincides with intellectual disabilities.

It is worth noting that infantile autism is defined as a deep pathological syndrome that appears in early childhood. It is characterised by a clear retreating attitude and failures in establishing adequate interpersonal relationships. In addition, we observe disorders such as bizarre behaviour in the immediate environment, typically include a fascination with inanimate objects and insistence on routine, ordering and uniformity. Among experts there is no univocity as to the substance of this disorder (Reber 2000, p. 72).

Statistical data says that autism affects 2 to 5 per 10,000 children, with one girl affected for 4 to 5 boys. In addition to classic autism, Asperger's syndrome is distinguished (characterized by the absence of language and cognitive problems typical in the classical form of autism) and anorexia nervosa, which also shows some common features with autism, also being classified as specific borderline cases (Gamon, Bradgon 2003, p. 25).

It seems that in this context, autism is understood today in an adequate and consistent way. Continuous efforts are being made to create new techniques and methods to help people affected by this disease with a particular emphasis on autistic children at preschool and early school age.

Symptoms of autism

Autism is characterised by many symptoms localised in several dimensions. In terms of social interaction we can talk about such symptoms as:

- limited interest in other people;
- difficulties in establishing contact;
- lack of interest in social plays;
- lack of appropriate responses to social stimuli;
- lack of reaping the joy of being with others;
- difficulties in imitating the behaviour of others;
- no response to the interest and praise;
- difficulties in participating in alternating games and activities (Pisula 2010, p. 39–40).

Special attention should be paid to the difficulties of children with autism in the area of communication, which relate to:

- understanding the function of communication;
- the creation of joint attention;
- non-verbal aspects of communication;
- shortcomings of typical forms of communication on the preverbal stage;
- understanding the relationships between the listener and speaker;
- organising information so that they are understood by the caller;
- noticing and correcting communication errors;
- communicating in order to share interests – bringing subjects, showing them (Pisula 2010, p. 43).

It is important to notice the major symptoms of autism occurring in the field of so-called rigid patterns of behaviour, interests and activities:

- reluctance to change;
- commitment to fixed patterns, practices, objects;

- motor mannerisms;
- schematic in the fun;
- persistent, narrow interest (Pisula 2010, p. 56).

It is worth noting that similar symptoms of autism can be seen in adults suffering from psychotic disorders (Stepulak 2010, p. 73).

The main symptoms of disorders of the reception and processing of sensory stimulation should also be mentioned:

- touch – the child does not tolerate touching, stroking, kissing, prefers objects with a specific texture;
- hearing – a child covers their ears in noisy environments or runs away from them, listens to certain sounds or cannot tolerate certain sounds, cannot repeat the pronunciation of words;
- smell – reacts strongly to certain smells or does not pay attention to those which are unpleasant and irritating for others;
- sight – fascinated by bright, flashing or coloured lights, does not distinguish between colours, use of peripheral vision;
- taste – eats only foods with a certain taste, does not accept new tastes, eat products that are not fit for consumption, does not distinguish between the taste of food;
- sense of balance – is not afraid of heights, she loves to hang around, have too much or too little muscle tone, prefers a lying position;
- proprioception (sensation of the muscles and joints) – the child is not aware of what is happening to his body, cannot control its individual parts or move them without checking visually, has difficulty in performing precise movements (Pisula 2010, p. 58–59).

Some studies have found that in some people with autism there are some abnormalities in the cerebellum. The cerebellum is a structure surrounding the brain stem, tasked with regulating motor control and balancing the whole body. The existence of defects in the limbic system

was noted, also in the structures responsible for emotions, memory and learning. Because it is these features and abilities that distinguishes autistic people from healthy individuals, it seems that abnormalities in these brain structures may play a role in the development of autistic disorder (Bradgon, Gamon 2006, p. 39).

Kochański A. (2015 p. 25–26) characterises autism as follows:

- difficulty in taking into account and uderstanding the meaning of what others think ("I think that you think"),
- difficulty within the meaning of the fact that others do not know what I think ("if I do, I think we all think the same thing"),
- lack of capacity to participate in alternate social interaction (unaware of the existence of needs, intentions and interests of the caller),
- difficulty in creating a mental representation of emotional states of other people,
- difficulty in predicting the behaviour of others,
- lack of tenderness in social relations, full verbalization of thoughts,
- disorders of empathy,
- lack of negotiation skills,
- objectification of others,
- difficulty within the meaning of the convention of jokes, metaphors, irony, proverbs, inability to play pretend, role play, aberrant expression of own emotions.

In working with an autistic child, systematic educational work plays a huge role. In this the therapist must know the development rights of the child at preschool and early school age whilst at the same time they should very actively animate specific behaviours conducive to the socialization of the child and help him discover the correct hierarchy of values (Bejger 2014, p. 212).

It should be noted that contemporary theorists and researchers of childhood autism in a precise way describe the basic symptoms of autism. This does not mean, however, that autism has been fully investigated. Still

the issue of early childhood autism is highly appreciated by theorists and practitioners of this disorder.

Ethical and psychological aspects of therapy with an autistic child

Working with autistic children at preschool and early school is not easy and requires from the therapist and parents special professional competence and high moral qualifications. Although there is no formal code of ethics which would present the principles of working with autistic children, there are numerous proposals for such standards and ethical principles. Renata Stefańska-Klar has proposed a list of rules that can be treated as a code of ethics in working with children and people affected by autism. They were presented by the author at the International Scientific Symposium on "Autism – biological, ethical and legal dilemmas" in Krakow in November 2000. These principles seem particularly important when there is a debate over the definition of secure borders for the treatment of autism.

Therapy for autism – the general ethical and pragmatic principles (independent of the age of the patient):

1. "To do no harm in any way!
2. Reduce pain and alleviate suffering.
3. Adequately assist in meeting the individual therapeutic, educational and development needs, that is by acting differently, using methods and techniques which take into account the dynamics of changes in capabilities and development needs.
4. Individualize approach to increase the effectiveness of the therapy and patient comfort.
5. Take the challenges arising from the uniqueness of the patient and the system in which he or she lives.
6. Enable the liberation and development of the unique potential of the individual patient.
7. Protect, prevent and ensure the safety of the patient and his development.

8. Demonstrate and promote the positive values, goals and standards, giving direction for the patient and arising the enthusiasm and hope of allowing his transgression"[6].

The author adds to these general standards certain more specific rules:

1. "Consider biological diversity in autism, manifested by:

- the level of individual differences (temperament, abilities),
- the level of the biological causes and conditions of autism,
- the level of associated diseases and disability,
- interaction between these levels.

2. Work with the person rather than the symptoms or behaviours: contact with a person and in a manner in which you would like to be treated. E.g. use understandable but not depleted repertoire of communication means to people: ask, agree, require, encourage to self-observation, share insights, translate intentions, negotiate and teach to negotiate, convince, talk about what needs to be done without consent and perform it; express satisfaction and dissatisfaction, joy, sadness and disappointment, joke, apologise, ask, enjoy, be offended, forgive; call these states and explain what they mean.

3. Include biographical continuity of a person, bind together the past, present and future; bearing in mind what that person was once, work in the immediate area of its development, at the same time be ahead with your thoughts of the current stage, exceeding it and expecting future results. This will not only facilitate your work, but will also enable a person with whom you are working to build a stable system landmark for themselves and their fate to the world and ongoing changes that happen to this world. Self is based on the autobiographical memory and included information about different events – "dry" information about oneself

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6   domrainmana.pl, access, 2016-03-26.

played a smaller role in the regulation of behaviour than personal memories with a brief commentary ordered in the timeline and understandable to the subject.

4. Do not limit future performance with the methods that give immediate results, but do not stimulate growth or even block it (e.g. by creating rigid habits or production of anxiety reactions, generalizing to new class of situation or behaviour"[7].

One example of the correct approach to the autistic child is the pedagogical therapy of M. Montessori, in which the commitment and approach to "child differences" is very important. The emotional state of parents plays a very important role here, as parents, unable to come to terms with the illness of the child, do not have adequate motivation to provide the child with appropriate interpersonal relationships. In such cases, therefore, intervention of a psychological and pedagogical character is necessary, in order to clarify any doubts and the general mechanisms of the particular disorder from which the child suffers. The role of the therapist who supports the development of the child consists in teaching – showing parents how they can support the development of the child, his interest in specific and general skills. The foreground role of the therapist comes down to starting the dialogue needed to meet the external signs of the child's desire. The child feels safe and understood, and is willing to start cooperation (Oklińska 2008, p. 84).

Particularly important in the case of an autistic child is a sense of security in preschool and school conditions. The need for security includes two basic dimensions: care and trust. Daily, authentic concern for the child gives him some messages indicating that he is important for the teacher and that he has a significant value. The child will trust such a person and will be able to spontaneously entrust the information necessary for its proper and correct conduct of treatment (Flanz 2008).

Another fundamental problem of a psychological and ethical character is the socialisation of the child, especially during preschool. According

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7 Ibidem.

to the program of classes, each child is involved every day in different types of therapy. Some are conducted in the privacy of his well-known group, the others are associated with leaving to the room in which professionals are working (psychologist, teacher, therapist, music therapist, speech therapist, etc.). Once a month there are concerts performed by professional musicians, theatre, dog therapy classes, as well as occasional events. These kinds of institutions are open to parents and students. Such a program gives a very clear message proclaiming the great importance for the development of an autistic child which has a social integration in a wider sense. In such surroundings, the psychological and moral dimensions of education are more fully realised (Raszewska 2008, p. 137).

Quite a few ethical objections are raised by behavioural therapy since, according to the parents of children with autism, it does not satisfy their emotional needs. There is also no respect to the dignity and autonomy of their children, especially in terms of the methods of reducing unwanted behaviour. However, when these methods are "softened", it is possible to meet and engage in dialogue. The basic condition should be to respect the dignity and subjectivity of the autistic person. Failure to meet these conditions blocks the creation of an emotional bond between the therapist and the person treated. A special role is played by such skills and qualities of the therapist, which can saturate even the most sophisticated and algorithmized methods with "emotional heat" (Bobkowicz- -Lewartowska 2005, p. 35).

An important feature of the therapist in working with an autistic child must be patience and humility in the context of their own competence. In working with children, next to a sense of competence equally important are moral qualifications. This includes a working method for achieving milestones in the development and planning of treatment (Sundberg 2015).

The therapist must be aware of the fact that in order to help a child with autism he should acquire the skills needed to deal with their own problems, frustration, stress and emotions. The therapist has to come to terms with what he could not do and what not to do:

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- We cannot neither by force nor kindness eradicate the autism of a child.
- We cannot force him to "come back to our world" by imposing our attention and demanding a reaction.
- We cannot afford to show our anger or pain when the child does not pay attention to the toy that seemed to us ideal for him, or if rejected our efforts of cheering him up, taking on the hands or hugging the child.
- We cannot apply a whole range of strategies of education which usually take effect against non-autistic children, e.g. penalties in the form of a ban on playing with others (for an autistic child, this would even be a prize) or a prize of a "trip to the cinema or to the zoo" (this would probably be seen as a punishment).
- We cannot expect that if we devote ourselves over many years completely to work on the "treatment" of the child, it will eventually grow into a "healthy" (non-autistic) man. No matter how well he will be able to function in the future, the brain retains a distinct, abnormal thinking and way of processing information.
- We should not compare our child with autistic and non-autistic peers – his experience of the world is in fact unique (Moor 2006, p. 202).

The Ethical-Professional Code of Psychologists[8] reminds psychologists about the obligation to treat children with special care: "Minors should be treated in a special way. The basic principle of a psychologist working with minors is their good, which means that these people in contact with a psychologist have no less rights than adult clients. Contact with a psychologist in any case cannot be carried out under pressure from the institutions and adults deciding on behalf of the minor. In this case and in the event of finding infringement by the institution or adults the good of a minor, a psychologist has the right to refuse to cooperate with

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8 Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne, *Kodeks Etyczno – Zawodowy Psychologa*, Warsaw 1992, no 19.

these institutions and individuals. The psychologist has a moral obligation to stand in defence of the minor. The psychologist has the right and the obligation to respect the decision of a minor as a human person in terms of contacts with him".

An important issue in working with an autistic child is the issue of professional secrecy. In this case, the professional secrecy exposes its specific nature in the context of the interpersonal relationship between the therapist and autistic child. The quality of this relationship lies in the personal situation of the child and therapist, and in a situation which both parties of relationship are referring to. Autistic child wants to keep their secrets, the therapist tries to discover them in order to help (Stepulak 2014, p. 207).

It should be emphasized that the therapist enters into direct and very close relationship with the patient – an autistic child through their professional activities. This, in turn, places specific requirements on the therapist as to the trust which he received in the course of working with autistic children (Stepulak 2007, p. 24).

Considering the above problems, therapists and other professionals working with autistic children should continuously raise not only their professional skills but also care about raising the moral qualifications.

The socialisation dimension of children's autism

Socialisation could be generally described as a process of interaction of the group with the unit (Skorny 2013, p. 143). It is worth noting that the understanding of socialisation is assumed in broader and narrower terms. A broader understanding suggests that socialisation can be called any impact of the group on a person. However, in the case of a narrower understanding of socialisation we are dealing with the impact of a group representing a particular culture, giving the appearance of socially expected changes in the behaviour of the person (Stepulak 2007). At this point it is worth being interested in the scope of the concept of socialisation itself, because it also refers in a particular way to an autistic child.

Table 1. The scope of the concept of socialisation (Stepulak 2007)

The criteria of determining the scope of the concept of socialisation	Broader understanding of socialisation	Narrower understanding of socialisation
Types of groups which have impact on a person	Groups creating culture and subculture	Groups creating culture
Changes that occur in a person under the influence of a group	All changes which occur in a person	Changes in the scope of social activities useful for a group
Period of life in which socialisation occurs	Socialisation occurs in different periods of life	Socialisation occurs in childhood

It is worth noting that the process of socialisation does not consist of the move from individual to team operations by replacing one with the other. The concept of socialisation assumes relating those activities and actions that require the participation of others and this is particularly important while therapeutic work with autistic children.

Socialization, therefore, is defined as a process of learning and knowledge acquisition by a person, of shaping their value system, language proficiency, social skills and social sensitivity. This sensitivity allows a person to integrate into society and to act in it adaptively. Socialisation thus understood is long-term, lifelong. It should be noted, however, that the predominant use of the term refers to a process that involves inculcating a child with socially accepted values and teaching him social roles (Reber 2007, p. 685). It is a process which is important and very difficult in the work with autistic children.

W. Okon believed that socialisation constitutes all of the activities on the part of society, and especially of such educational entities as family, school and social environment, heading to make this person a social unit. The idea in this case was to allow the unit to gain sufficient qualifications and systems of values and achievements of personality development to be able to become a fully-fledged member of society. Socialisation according to this pedagogue can also be understood as a general change in the person under the influence of social interactions, which enable him to gradually become a fully-fledged member of society, something which

has a huge, fundamental meaning in the case of an autistic child (Okon 1987, p. 278).

Modern science emphasises the assertion that man is a social being. Throughout his whole life, a man meets other people and in this way multiple social situations are born. You can talk about two main groups of social situations. The first of these situations are straightforward ones and in this context we can talk about concepts such as entities, individuals. An example of such a situation is an autistic child, representing a certain uniqueness and autonomy, although people cannot completely isolate themselves from the surrounding social groups. It is worth noting that we are all members of a larger community or society and other people remain elements of such communities and societies (Stepulak 2013, Mika 1987, p. 9–11).

Man begins to be understood as properly different (this is the case especially for autistic children) against the background of communities and groups living together as a member of society, developing among them by giving them their own personal input to the life of the whole group. In such a group, even family, everyone mutually influences each other, they can help themselves and develop these references respectively (Stepulak 2013, Homplewicz 1996, p. 110).

In social education and throughout the process of socialisation we can distinguish four basic types of social relations:

- Community relationship. People creating this relationship identify with each other, are equivalent. The sense of belonging to the group is important. An example of such a relationship is the mother-son relationship, a loving relationship between two people.
- Hierarchical relationship. It is a relation of the asymmetric type, arranged vertically – with any two people, one is always above and the other below. Certain privileges and responsibilities strictly depend on the place in the hierarchy. Persons who are higher in the hierarchy are entitled to priority, greater benefits and respect, but may have a greater duty of care – defence type. Quite the opposite is with people standing below. An example of such a relationship

is a military hierarchy of command or dependency such as feudal lord – vassal.

- The relationship of equality. In this case people equal to each other begin working. They ensure balance and the rule of reciprocity. They share goods equally, take a decision after the vote. Examples of such references are common residents of the dorm room.
- The relation of market exchange. People belonging to this type of relationship operate on the principle of balancing benefits and costs. They maintain correct relations only in a situation where they are worthwhile. An important role in this case is played by the relation of demand – supply, prices, wages and the rate of profit. An example of such relationship is a buyer – seller or a travel agency – tourist (Fiske 1992, p. 689–723, Wojciszke 2012, p. 373).

It is worth noting that the above mentioned relations are present in different cultures of the world, they determine certain principles and social and moral standards of life. The implementation of these relations in the process of social education determines the style of the later behaviour of pupils. It can clearly be seen how important two person relationships are for the social development of man and his upbringing. These relations have a huge impact on making friends, colleagues and parents to loving relationships. In this context, you can be aware of the following components of such relationships. The given observations and proposals are very important in working with autistic children.

- The proximity and frequency of interaction. The frequency of such interactions depends on the proximity of residence or proximity to the workplace or even entertainment. The interaction leads to liking and this initiates a cycle of positive feedback. Two people interacting should have equal status and membership of the same group, working together on common goals.
- Similarity. People who like others if they are similar to them in certain respects. It is interesting that they like people with similar attitudes, beliefs and values, as well as similar geographical origin,

but do not necessarily like those who have similar personality dispositions.

- Reinforcement. Research in a youth custody centre for girls show some regularity. The girls that were popular helped and protected others, encouraged them to act and comforted them. They controlled even their own emotions and feelings so as not to cause anxiety or depression in others. At the same time, the girls that were unpopular were dominant, aggressive and demanded people pay attention to them and forced to do something for their needs. Such attitudes were interpreted in terms of providing rewards and minimising costs by the popular girls, while unpopular girls were defined as attempting to earn rewards for themselves and passing on the costs to others.

- Equality. People accept the equivalent relations in social references. This means that everyone wants to gain satisfaction proportional to its contribution. For young couples, people who feel undervalued or overestimated are less happy than those who are convinced that there is a balance in this respect.

- Physical attractiveness. This issue is important in friendship and in love, especially in relations between men and women.

- Sympathy reciprocated. If person B likes A, then A is likely to like B. This is evidenced by certain signals, such as mimic expression, proximity, tone of voice, etc.

- The emotional state of the elected. If A is in a good mood when meets B, A will like B probably more. Therefore, if the partners share emotional experiences, it makes them attracted to each other.

- The need for affiliation. Some people feel a great need to have a lot of friends and social contact.

- Self-revealing. This applies to situations when two people get to know closer, then gradually reveal to each other more and more intimate information about themselves.

- Building a life together. This applies to marriages and other long-term relationships. They are the source of commitment, growing out of the joint action (Argyle 1991, p. 179–184).

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Conclusion

The problem of childhood autism in pre-school and primary age becomes the object of scientific reflection not only in the psychological area, but also in the moral and ethical dimension. Understanding the term "autism" as enclosure in an inner world has become an attractive research topic, even though the very diagnosis of autism has never been simple. The subject of this article was autism in its specific type. It is worth noting that we observe a lot of the symptoms of autism recognised in three main areas. The issue of therapy with autistic children causes a lot of problems because of the "depth" of the disorder. Therefore there are ongoing systematic works on new methods and techniques to help autistic children, accompanied by some ethical objections. It sometimes transpires that the principles and ethical standards are exceeded and it is therefore necessary to adjust activities to certain ethical standards which are proposed by specialists – practitioners. A child with autism deserves special attention and trust and this, among other things, guarantees therapeutic success. It is worth to mention a very important aspect of therapeutic and educational work with autistic children – socialisation. This process involves the use of all possible methods, techniques and tools that would foster the possibility of free, daily activity for such children in society.

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Educational Potential of the Artistic Expression of Visual Impairment in Books for Children and Youth[9]

Abstract: In accordance with the request of holistic child's personality development, education by artistic means seems to be helpful and effective in removing barriers and deepening a child's skills to understand and respect otherness and as one of the effective ways leading to the social acceptation and inclusion of people with some kind of handicap. This paper deals with the possibilities of the educational use of illustrated books for children and youth, which thematise one handicap type – visual impairment. It starts from the assumption of the high effectiveness of experiential methods and examines inclusive thinking formation options and the attitudes of unimpaired pupils through experiential activities, which use illustrated books thematising blindness. The solution to the issue comes from the analysis and comparison of the poetological aspects of artistic expression of such handicaps in concrete book titles. The paradigmatic differences between books illustrated in traditional ways and artistically experimental books are defined.

Keywords: book illustration, visual handicap, aesthetics, reception, preschool and elementary education.

Introduction

Although the inclusion of physically, mentally and socially disadvantaged people is currently a high social issue, the realization of inclusive changes in society as well as the promotion of inclusive educational ideas are only progressing slowly in school practice. The success of inclusion depends mainly on the understanding and acceptance of the specifics of disadvantaged people, while the key is, according to several authors (e.g. Gash, 1996; Siperstein et al., 2003), the active building of positive attitudes towards the disadvantaged on the part of the able-bodied majority. It is necessary to start with the formation of inclusive thinking from an early child age, ideally from the family environment and the lowest levels of education in order to make inclusive changes successful. Nowadays, mainly the identification and elimination of barriers between the intact and disadvantaged population to build an inclusive culture is required, in which disadvantaged persons are perceived and accepted as unique and fully-valued individuals. The experiential teaching methods are offered to able-bodied pupils to overcome distorted perceptions and prejudices. These methods support the development of emotional intelligence and act on pupil motivation and activation.

The area of world book production for children and youth also reflects the global trends in the inclusion of disadvantaged. The titles that represented various types of handicap are becoming more frequent in these trends. These books provide diverse opportunities for the formation of inclusive thinking and attitudes towards the disadvantaged according to the important position of artistic literature in the life of the child and their school education. The paper examines the educational potential of illustrated books that thematize the visual impairment, particularly its most severe form – blindness.

The starting point is a definition of blindness as a sensory disadvantage. We give, for a better understanding of the issue, some mistaken beliefs that remain about this disability among the intact society. A mode of the artistic expression of handicap largely reflects its perception by the society and at the same time forms the personality of a young person.

We will focus on the different modalities of the artistic transformation of visual impairment in children's books in another part of the paper. The book illustration is a visual interpretation of a literary text and its features are in many ways derived from the very literary purpose and content. It further develops the literary idea, as a visual similarity of the text, while use specific and sensory language picture. Therefore, we have analysed perceptual and reception specifics in the context of intact as well as disadvantaged child reader/viewer on selected books. We examine, by means of fine arts methods (description, interpretation, qualitative analysis and comparison), paradigmatic shift between traditional and innovative ways of artistic expression of visual impairment in illustrations. The aim is to identify the ethical and axiological dimension of the child's authentic experience from these illustrations and on this basis to specify the opportunities that are offered for capitalizing on educational communication.

Blindness as a severe sensory handicap

Sight is the most important sense in human interactions with the environment. It is stated that a healthy individual obtains about 70–80 % of their information[10] about the outside world through the visual channel. Sight allows the simultaneous perception of large amounts of information about the environment without the risk of threat by immediate contact (Démuth, 2013). Blindness belongs to the most severe sensory disabilities. This is either a complete loss of the sight (complete blindness[11]) or a significant reduction of visual acuity (practical blindness[12]).

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[10] Some authors have reported up to 90–95% of the information obtained from the visual perception (e.g. Démuth, 2013).

[11] A complete blindness is medically defined as the loss of vision; it ranges from a total loss of light perception to a preserved light perception with faulty light projection, i.e. loss of the ability to determine the direction from which the light comes.

[12] In practical blindness the rest of a sight is preserved but at the insufficient rate for the ordinary practical life.

Blind people compensate for a deficit in visual information by means of other sensory channels (supplementation of the missing visual perceptions by hearing, touch, smell, taste). Nevertheless, they have specific needs in terms of self-service, movement and spatial orientation, in access to education, written communication, etc. Visual impairment, except for impossibilities of visual perception, carries peculiarities in area of visual imagination. There are differences between individuals with congenital and acquired loss of sight. Once created, sight ideas maintain in the memory for long periods of time and fade away only slowly for those who have lost their sight in adulthood. Loss of sight at an early age in which visual skills are just developing[13] means for later life a complete lack of sight ideas (a state comparable with congenital blindness). Congenitally blind people create phenomenal ideas of physical world on the basis of tactile-kinaesthetic perception.[14] However, these ideas are limited to relatively small and close subjects. These ideas are either missing or they are in a form of considerably subjective ideas about subjects that cannot be reached (the sun, stars in the sky, valley), about their specific visual properties (colour, light-superficial aspect of subjects, their optic manifestation, perspective phenomena) or intangible concepts based on visual experience (horizon, top view). Although the language registry of blind people does include terms related to visuality, the blind cannot rely on their own sensory experience and knowledge, these words are used by "learning method" according to standard speech and knowledge mastery (a lemon is yellow, the sun sets over the horizon).

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[13] As stated by A. Démuth (2013), *"vision of colours, shapes, motion, face recognition, but also the resulting images and problems of the constancy of colours, sizes, as well as the actual awareness of the seen is extremely complex process that does not take place only on the retina but it requires participation of higher cortical centres"* (p. 36). For storing visual images in memory it is usually stated age limit of vision loss in 5 years.

[14] Space perception in sighted individuals is ensured by the coordination of three sensory analysers – visual, cutaneous and kinetic.

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Myths and prejudices related to blindness

The representation of blind people is not high in the total number of population in developed countries.[15] Their inclusion into normal life currently faces various obstacles. Most of the people from standard population have, therefore, no personal experience with the blind persons. There is a huge amount of distorted notions about blindness, due to the lack of education about disabilities in society, specifically concerning the nature of these sensory limitations and how it affects the mental and social life of a blind person is poorly conceived for a healthy individual. We can choose, from the extended misconception of how the blind people perceive the world, the following:[16]

Blind people see only darkness. In fact, the blind person sees nothing, visual sensations are absent. This condition is described to the sighted as "I see the way you see with your elbow".

Blind people have much a better sense of touch and hearing (often musical, too) or have developed special senses (e.g. for the perception of obstacles, colour perception, etc.). In fact, the loss of sight is not used to being compensated for by the congenital strengthening of other senses or "the sixth" sense. However, it is an incentive for their gradual development to the extent that it can give the impression of special skills or talent of a blind person.

You shouldn't talk to blind people about colours and other visual stimuli. The inability to see means for them a significant impoverishment of life. In fact, the blind person commonly uses expressions associated with sighted perception and visuality. People with congenital blindness do not feel the inability to see colours or beauty of the landscape as depletion. They create a practical relation to the visual aspect of the world.

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[15] According to the WHO, there are 39.000 people affected by total loss of vision in the world, the majority in developing countries. In Slovakia 0.06% of the population suffer from the total blindness (according to Pšenková et al., 2012).

[16] Prepared according to the publications issued by associations for the blind (Kovaříková, 2016; Hošová, Hůrková, & Michálek, 2015).

Blind people do not dream and fantasize; respectively their dreams and fantasies are deficient. In fact, dreams and fantasies are a normal part of the blind life, even though they are filled with non-visual content (sounds, smells, tactile sensations). The absence of figurative elements in their dreams and fantasies does not mean their incompleteness for the blind persons.

Blind people live outside the visual culture. They do not engage in visual aesthetics. In fact, blind people are also interested in fine arts, photography, films and architecture. They care for the aesthetics of the environment and clothing. Not only can blind persons perceive some aspects of images (e.g. space accessible via tactile illustrations), but they are also able to create the picture representations on their own – symbolic drawings to express their own cognition (Kennedy, 1993).

It should be noted that when calculating prejudices about blindness, even a blind person applies mistaken beliefs to sighted people. Barriers between the world of the blind and the sighted are often reversible. The prerequisite of the development of inclusive thinking is the cognition that the emotions, needs and aspirations of the sighted and the blind are in many ways similar.

Overcoming the barriers between the worlds of the sighted and the blind through art

The implementation of inclusive ideas in the educational environment impacts also upon educational stereotypes. A widespread misconception in school practice is the assumption that in order to change the negative attitudes of fully abled pupils towards disadvantaged ones, factual information about the handicap and the use of teaching methods affecting the intellect are sufficient. However, as noted by L. Požár (2009), "under appropriate attitude we understand not only a simple disappearance of unequivocally refused tendencies, but also confidence in the possibilities and capabilities of a disabled one, the willingness to join

with him in a variety of interactions, the confidence in his own compe-
tence to handle interaction" (p. 40).

With this aim, the methods of experiential learning appear to be
much more suitable. An authentic experience of an intact pupil with one
with a handicap supports the internalization of principles and values of
an inclusive culture, the development of social skills in contact with the
disadvantaged that will ultimately pave the way for the creation of an in-
clusive society.

Art is one of the ways in which we can approximate the world of the
blind to intact pupils, not only at the level of factual knowledge. "It pro-
vides an image of reality peacefully and emotionally" by its very nature,
"transforms the reality itself through sensory perception, adventures and
personal experience, too" (Šupšáková, 2007, p. 101), while helping to shape
the cognitive, emotional and behavioural components of a pupil's atti-
tude towards the disadvantaged ones. A child learns the moral standards
and values of the society through art and due to the authenticity of art's
statement learns to be naturally perceptive and empathetic. As noted by
E. Mistrík (2001), "information about the world acquired from an art is soon
becoming a part of the children's experiential world"; and thus they do
not need to be "transformed with difficulty from the rational designed
schemes to live and practical experiences" (p. 429).

**The portrayal of the world of blind people in visual art and con-
temporary illustrations**

Visual impairment is not a rarely embodied topic in art by any means.
Portrayals of blind persons are often, for instance, in the art of ancient Egypt.
In Western culture they appear in mythological and biblical scenes. Modern
attributes of blind people are the blind cane, guide dog and dark glasses;
however, the "iconography of the blindness" has been formed over a long his-
tory. Closed eyes, their deformation or the sight obscured by a cataract re-
sembles blindness in historical depictions. Their physical pose emphasizes
servility (a blind person groping in space, relies on close subjects, is directed

by a sighted person). It is often referred to by the social allocation of a blind person (located away from other people, in a specific area of the orphanage, hospice). The negative state of mind might be read out in his face (sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, closeness). Images of working exclusion and the poverty of a blind person are often found in the illustrated images (beggars, street musicians). In history, images of the blind are associated with the allegorical expression of ignorance. They are usually portrayed in didactical or satirical works in a negative light. Historical variations of embodiment of blind people depend on varying societal attitudes towards the handicapped that has changed during times from exclusion and loath up to compassion and kindness. T multiplicity of portrayals of blind people is related to the prevalence of visual impairment in the past. However, the images of blind people have appeared increasingly rarely in recent centuries. Persons with medical and psychological peculiarities were marginalized in modern times and the cult of physical beauty pushed them to the edge of artistic attention.

In the contemporary society there is growing interest in marginalized groups and the effort to know and understand their otherness is noticeable. The shifts in the societal thinking are reflected also in the artistic literature and its illustrations. Children's books that represent various types of medical, mental and social disadvantage have started to increase in the new millennium. The intention of their creators is to overcome prejudices and provide double-sided access between the culture of the majority and disadvantaged people. The outlined literary trend abroad reflects the initiatives and projects that are systematically devoted to this type of book. They create databases for parents and educators and provide guidance for their educational implementation.

Good examples of the current artistic depiction of blindness are the illustrations in the Slovak book *Mimi a Lisa* (Kerekesová, Moláková, Salmela, 2013) and in its sequel *Mimi a Lisa II* (Kerekesová, Moláková, Salmela, 2015).[17]

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[17] Books follow the homonymous series of animated bedtime story by Katarína Kerekesová and Katarína Moláková. The author of the text is Alexandra Salmela, illustrations and book design originated in cooperation of animators and illustrators Katarína Kerekesová, Boris Šíma and Ivana Šebestová. Simultaneously with animated and literary treatment the radio adaptation of the story was published.

These fairy-tales represent the friendship between a sighted and a blind girl, who, due to their contrasting natures, also discover the diversity of the world and life's peculiarities together (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: *Mimi a Líza* (2013), book illustration
by K. Kerekesová, B. Šíma and I. Šebestová, p. 92–93

The book is generously illustrated throughout. The blind Mimi is portrayed as an ordinary girl and her closed eyes are the only conventional sign of her visual impairment. Mimi's enlarged ear cleverly emphasizes the importance of the hearing compensation of blind people. Everyday life, with children's playful imagination, is mingled in the girls' common experiences. Their fantasy world is portrayed extraordinary sensual and it is colourful and rich in fine details. It is filled with a lot of human and fairy-tale creatures and interesting things. The painting structure alternates between graphic patterns and areas reminiscent of various surface textures in the mode of artistic presentation. This visual variety acts also evocative and synesthetic on other senses. The images are intertwined and run into the text, with the typography sometimes expressive, as if it reminds us that the pictoriality of language is also important for

blind Mimi. Therefore there is nothing to suggest that the blind girl lives in a deficient world,[18] in which dark emptiness and sadness is extended. The illustrations enable the child reader to empathize with the position of the sight impaired and such a "reincarnation" does not create discomfort, but an exemption that helps to discover new and unusual ways of perception.

Experimental approaches to the illustration rendition of visual impairment

Many contemporary illustrators are looking for unconventional ways of artistic design aspects of visual impairment. Their illustrations, in the experimental books, do not count only with the visual but also with tactile perception. That is the way they get closer to the tactile books[19], which are used as a didactic tool in typhlopaedics[20] for several decades. Practical-educational function is not prevailed in them. Primarily, they are made from artistic motives and their circle of recipients is not strictly narrowed only to blind people. The texts in these books tend to be (considering the stress placed on the artistic element of the book) minimalistic, printed simultaneously in black print and in Braille. This type of book tends to be marked with the attributes "accessible" and "inclusive" abroad, because it is as a new and specific "genre" of the art book that is interesting for the sighted as well as for the blind. At the same time, it is open to

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[18] A deficient world is the world, *"which is for the subject of epic events or subjective termination of certain terms (ultimately existential) problematic – i.e. scarce, inadequate, incomplete"* (Rédey, 2012, p. 7).

[19] Tactile books help blind and partially sighted children to explore the world through touch. They may or may not contain text in a larger black print and Braille. The illustrations in the book are in relief, made of dissimilar materials (textiles, cardboard, felt, leather, wood, etc.). They are made by hand (several copies) or three-dimensional relief printing images to the plastic sheeting. Tactile books develop kinesthetic and tactile perception, preparing to read Braille and stimulate the spatial imagination of blind children.

[20] A field of special education – the education of visually impaired.

their shared reading and "viewing". The extraordinary rendition of topics related to visual perception is a challenge for the dialogue between the blind and sighted recipient (educator, parent, classmate) in which the parties can exchange information about the individual specifics of perception and cognition, but also about their perception and understanding of visual culture. We will try to suggest the educational potential of these experimental approaches by means of concrete examples.

The book pages of *The Black Book of Colours*[21] (Cottin, 2008) are "colourless"; their black colour is a "zero" colour, the lack of light that is reflected from objects and which is the physical prerequisite of colour perception. The "colour" of strawberries, birds' feathers, leaves and rain is indicated only by plastic lines, contours and surface textures of natural materials (Fig. 2). This visual deficiency allows us to perceive the colours of nature by "other" eyes – as an emotional quality paradoxically. It also suggests the relativity and volatility of reality which is a human construction.
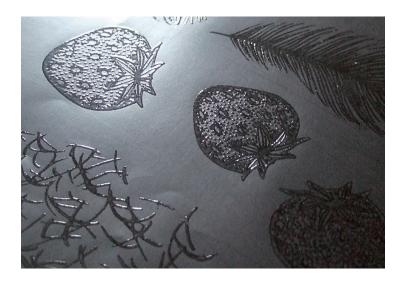

**Fig. 2: *The Black Book of Colors* (2008), book illustration
by R. Faría, unpaged**

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[21] Text by Menena Cottin, illustrations by Rosana Faría.

Another book, *El cuento fantasma*[22] (Gamboa, 2012), is a fairy-tale about the ghost of a never read story, who hides in a dark corner of the library. He feels himself inferior to the ghosts of other and more famous stories. In a formula that is always repeated when someone approaches ("I'm a phantom, no one sees me, I'm a phantom.") he expresses the humble acceptance of his own predispositions and fear of interaction that is experienced by many blind people. The ghost-story ultimately finds its reader – a blind girl who helps him to appreciate his uniqueness and value. The book is interesting not only by the literary idea, but also by its visual processing. An individual diversity of ghost-stories is reflected in deliquescent rainbow swirls of felt paper, which trace the relief of the library space created by the stacking of cuttings from white paper (Fig. 3). This stylization of the architectonical environment is subordinated to the optical phenomenality of the material objects and applies strict laws of perspective. This haptic information might be "at a first touch" confusing for a blind person, but might also be a source of knowledge about visual perception and visual culture.

**Fig. 3: *El cuento fantasma* (2012), book illustration
by Hsu Wen Chen, unpaged**

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[22] Text by Jaime Gamboa, illustrations by Hsu Wen Chen. The author of the illustrations won an award at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava in 2013.

Therefore, it is obvious that the experimentality of these books does not lie only in the artistic innovation of the illustrations. It is a mere change of philosophy in relation to blind people. Slovak artist Emília Blašková is the illustrator of the book *Žirafa mama a iné príšery/Giraffe mum and other creatures*[23] (Salmela, 2015) in the version for the blind. In the haptic as well as in the non-haptic illustration of this book, she uses cut-outs in paper through which the subsequent pages can be seen or at last guessed at (Fig. 4). The author justifies the use of this creative principle as follows: " 'Hatches' are considered as the opening of the page (image – illustration) to the spaces 'beyond seen/beyond seeing'. At this moment, I find several meaning layers for a sighted and a blind person."[24]

Fig. 4: *Žirafa mama a iné príšery/Giraffe Mum and Other Creatures* **(2015), book illustration by Emília Blašková, unpaged**

[23] Text by Alexandra Salmela. The tactile book won the special award in the illustrator competition The Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia in 2015.

[24] Private e-mail communication with the illustrator dated 2016-10-25.

The creators of these books emphasize the idea that visual impairment limits access to only one aspect of reality, the visual. Many essential things remain invisible to the eyes. Even the blind can live a colourful life, although its "colour" refers to something other than visual quality.

Conclusion

Contact with an artistic interpretation of the reality of blindness creates authentic situations in which a child can realize its own feelings, attitudes and values. It provides strong incentives for reflective perception: "a child receives news about the inner world of other people through emotionally saturated images", the artistic work thus represents "very important article of socialization and enculturation, because it broadens the horizons for children from narrow family, school or peer environment to universal human vision" (Mistrík, 2001, p. 430).

Despite the unique realizations of inclusive activities, we still lack a more specific and systematic didactic-methodological foundation for the development of inclusive attitudes. The presented analysis of the educational potential of illustrated books, with the topic of visual impairment in this context, might be seen as an outline of one of the possible ways of addressing the issue. Although it puts very high demands on the multi-disciplinary competencies of educator and cross-subject linking, pupils can in this way discover and appreciate not only the otherness of the perception of blind people, but also individual traits among individuals from the standard population (e.g. the diversity of cognitive styles according to sensory preferences) as well as the way of its own perception and knowledge of the world (metacognition).

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The Disadvantaged Character in Literature for Young Readers and in Inclusive Education

Abstract

Inclusive education apprises the dialogue between the standard population and a population with some kind of handicap. Artistic literature might help, already at an early age, to remove the barriers that present various types of disadvantaged people in society. In the introduction, the author briefly explains the topicality of inclusive education and outlines the purpose and methodological aspects of the paper. The main part of the study analyses the portrayal of young protagonists with a somatic and social disadvantage in contemporary literature for pre-school and younger school age children (Alexandra Salmela: Mimi and Lisa, Gabriela Futová: About the Hairless, Peter Karpinský: Adela, Do Not Even Try It!). In the conclusion, the author confronts the selected texts in terms of: 1. authenticity level of psychological grip of the disadvantaged character; 2. presentation of attitudes of standard population towards the characters with some kind of disadvantage; 3. levels and methods of literary presented issues; 4. an educational text's potential relating to the formation of accepting educational environment in pre-primary and primary education.

Key words: inclusive education, literature for children, presentation of disadvantage, psychological art authenticity, literary work value, educational work value.

Introduction

Individuals who are distinguished from other members by certain features, physical or mental, have always existed in human society. The attitudes of society towards this group of people have varied over the course of history from the repressive-indifferent (Ancient Greece & Rome) to preventive-integrative and inclusive (end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century). The relationship to people with disabilities has changed from abandonment, exclusion or the killing of the disabled through philanthropism and segregation to tolerance, respect for the individual and the admission of partnership with regard to diversity. The view of our society of a person with a disability now seeks to accept the well-known proposition of L. Vygotsky: "A child, whose development is complicated by disability, it is not simply less developed, but it is developed differently in comparison with non-disabled peers" (according to Požár, 2007, p. 72). The contemporary society, therefore, expects that every person, regardless of their differences, will be seen as a person with specific qualities (Vágnerová and Hadj-Moussová, 2003, p. 8–9).

Of course, the prejudices and stereotypes which existed in society towards the disabled[25] for thousands of years are difficult to break down and remove completely. The society (or individual) will not see a disabled person from the perspective of his divergence (meaning rejection or compassion), but only if they are truly removed. The situation changed in Slovakia after 1989, from this point of view, and the disabled have ceased to 'be hidden' from the sight of the public in isolated, disabled institutions, and society has gradually created the elementary conditions for them to satisfy their psychological needs at least; in that context, it was mainly about the need of self-realization and an open future.

The elimination process of prejudices and stereotypes is long and difficult. It is related to the integration of disabled children into main-

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[25] Besides the term *disabled person*, the term *disadvantaged person* is also used synonymously in the current pedagogical and psychological literature. We accept this terminological duality in the study.

stream schools and inclusive education,[26] while necessary special edu-
cational assistance will be maintained.

Beside the direct contact of the intact population of children with
the disabled, it is necessary to lead able-bodied children to an under-
standing of the essence that was quoted by L. Vygotsky: to accept the
right to be different. The acceptance will only succeed if it is formed in
a connection of cognition and emotionality – if a child (from the early
education) has a chance to relive certain situations in the so-called "*skin
of disabled person*". The literary story offers just such an option and it is,
in a way, an aestheticized adventure *life game*.

Of course, the manner of the issue of disability or disadvantage is lit-
erary theme-driven, and varies, inter alia, depending on the child's age.
A different approach (and generally a different genre, as well) is required
for a story for pre-readers and younger school age children, and yet an-
other for teenagers.

1. Methods

The subject of our interest are three selected prose works for pre-
school and younger school age children that thematize the situation of
a disabled child: the prose work of Alexandra Salmela *Mimi and Lisa*
(2013) and Gabriela Futová *About the Hairless* (2016) that present the
problem of somatic disability, and Peter Karpinský's *Adela, Do Not Even
Try It!* (2016) which looks at children from the disadvantaged environ-
ment. Within the framework of interpretive-analytical and comparative
operation, our intention is to follow:

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[26] Inclusion "(…), according to Kollárová E. (2015, p. 57), is an integration idea
developed to the higher quality, integration transformation". We then understand,
congruently with Hrebeňárová L. (2013, p. 42), the inclusive education as "(…) time
unlimited group membership of pupils with disabilities in the same peers group of
the same age with the necessary measure of support and services (…). It should be
a part of the social inclusion to promote it and thus prevent the social exclusion
of pupils."

- – Which stereotypes are reflected in the behaviour of the surrounding environment towards the disadvantaged person, and if so;
- – How does the disadvantaged literary hero accept his social role;
- – How is the role of a disadvantaged person reflected in the story concept (active, passive);
- – To what extent does the disadvantage become a handicap, and thus reflect in the social functioning and the character identity;
- – If so, and to what extent, is an effort stressed that serves as an alternative source of self-affirmation and self-esteem.

In the conclusion of the study, we offer a comparison of the particular concepts of the authors and their possible implementation in the educational arena in terms of: 1. level of authenticity of the disadvantaged character; 2. Presentation of attitudes of the standard population towards characters with some kind of disadvantage; 3. levels and methods of the literary presented issues; 4. an educational text's potential relating to the formation of an accepting educational environment in pre-primary and primary education.

2. Results

2.1. The world of the blind as a fantasy story

Alexandra Salmela's (1980) *Mimi and Lisa*[27] has an explicative subtitle: "One's eyes are always closed and the other's eyes are wide open. Each of them look, but they see together." The first sentence of the subtitle (and an appropriate title of the work) anticipates the fact that the story works with a so called contrastive figural couple[28] (the sighted man versus the blind).

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[27] Alexandra Salmela (1980) is Slovak living in Finland, writing both in Finnish and Slovak. The interpreted prose originated according to the prestigious television series based on the theme of Katarína Kerekes and Katarína Malákova. The bookish episode *Mimi and Lisa II* (2015) was created on the basis of the second TV series.
[28] F. Všetička (1986, p. 28) understands, under the term *figural pair*, a pair of characters who are based on parallel or contrast and they complement each other.

The subsequent warning on the semantic difference of expressions "to look" and "to see"[29] anticipates the fact that in order to perceive the essence, it is not enough to use sight as a sensory receptor.

Thus the subtitle indicates the story's message, and at the same time, by the dense shortcut and without disrupting the poetic of the text, gives basic information that one of the girls is blind. This information, obtained at the beginning of the first chapter, is the specific form of the blind heroine's self-witness. Through the "I"-narration, information about how blind people compensate for the lack of sense of seeing is also provided. This part of the chapter begins with a description of the space which is based on the tactile senses (a home's roughness and smoothness, the building material from which they are built; bars on the windows; the world proportions: a dad's big hand, a small Mimi's hand; the sun's heat) and the hearing senses (the house's height discerned by the intensity of birdsong; a tram's noise, the different steps' sound based on the pavement material, etc.). The imaginative description of the space is enclosed by the straightforward naming of the senses that compensate for the absent sight: "But, I've never seen the sun. I just feel how it warms me. I do not even see my toys. (…) You know, I'm blind. I see by hands and ears, and even a little bit by nose and tongue" (p. 10). In the same way, the limitations to the autonomous movement of the blind is termed straightforwardly ("I cannot walk out alone", p. 14) and an allusion of the necessary direct order of personal stuff ("I know exactly where everything is", p. 14) in terms of the limitation of orientation in space. The term *"blind"* is not perceived as socially incorrect in the initial self-witness and later in Mimi's replicas (the euphemistic expression *closed eyes* is used consistently by the author and is socially correct), which can be seen as a signal that the blind Mimi understands her social role and does not see the disability as a handicap.

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29 The Slovak Synonymous Dictionary (1995, p. 515, 813) explains the terms as follows: a verb *to look* – 1. track something, someone by the sight, to underpin the sight somewhere; 2. thoroughly investigate by the sight, to detect something; 3. exhibit an interest in someone, about something; 4. catch one's notice, taking into consideration; 5. to be seen, to be visible. The verb *to see* – 1. perceive by the sight; 2. recall in the mind, to imagine; 3. understand, to notice.

The particular stories take the form of an imaginative play based on thematic elements that allow one to specify the peculiarities of sensory perception in a sighted and blind person. A motif is, for example, darkness as a sign of the world that every sighted and blind person needs for the orientation by other senses than visual. In another story, colours are the key thematic element. The author smartly used the synesthetic principle to reflect the particularities of their perception in the world of the blind (the crossing of the perceptions from different sensory areas in one image): absent visual perception is expressed by tactile or hearing perception, for example the concrete wall is grey; tea in winter is red; yellow is the hot summer; green is the smell of grass, blue is "the one I hear when it rains" (p. 54). The games of two children imagined by fantasy, children's curiosity and imagination work regardless of the visual (dis)function in the stories of others. They specify the peculiarities of sensual perception by a sighted and a blind person, but also both have strengths and limitations, and life and the world are becoming richer and more interesting if we can understand and complement each other in our diversity. Alexandra Salmela thus managed to express the very essence of social inclusion purely by aesthetic means – by dynamic stories that are close to a joyful fantasy story.

If we would look for stereotypes in the attitudes in the book towards a disadvantage, certainly we could not find them in the two heroines. Blind Mimi is satisfied with her social status, obviously accepting herself in her own differences. Sighted Liza sees her friend as an equal partner for common games and fantasy, in which the initiative is taken spontaneously once by Mimi and another time by Lisa. She sees her disability as a difference in which it is necessary to seek inspiration for new views of the world and new discoveries (for example, she invents a plastic memory game with sewn animal figures).

2.2. Physical difference as fabulously imaginative stigma

For the prose work of Gabriela Futova,[30] the emphasis on story is characteristic and this was also reflected in the prose *About the Hairless* where

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[30] Gabriela Futová (1971) is a successful Slovak author of nearly twenty books for young and teenage readers.

the problem of otherness was presented. The protagonist is born and experiences her life without hair. The archetype of a folk-tale is obvious in the storyline scheme. It manifests itself in its incipit ("Once Upon a Time, there was one really good and happy Kingdom", p. 7). There is an ideal state at the beginning: a happy royal couple who had daughter called Elenka. The problem of deflection occurs by means of the appearance of "insufficiency" (Propp, 1969), which is the absence of hair on the girl's head, and thus the otherness from others. The name Hairless that she receives is thus a nomen omen. She perceives otherness as a handicap against the background of gender stereotype diversity: a girl should have long hair so they can be decorated and tied in braids. A bald head thus becomes stigmatic for the princess.[31]

The awareness of her own difference as the handicap (supported by several reactions of surroundings – laughing, embarrassing silence while looking at her bald head) reduces the self-esteem of the protagonist and influences the understanding of her own social role. The constant impulse to be compared with other "hairy" ones intensifies the feeling of otherness and results in the self-isolation of the protagonist: she is denied common games and contact with peers and the outside surroundings based on her own decision. This motive, against the background of the classic fairy-tale scheme, appears in the function of curse; due to the fairy-tale footprint, feelings of unhappiness for the handicapped man and his position in society might already be comprehensible for young reader.

The motif of the liberation of the princess is an obligatory subject element of classic fairy-tales; when we talk about Futova, then, it is about her liberation from self-isolation, and also about her internal conversion from the negative attitude to her own (bald) identity up to self-acceptance. The environs help her with it: the coachman Ďuro who is in love with her, friends, parents and vassals who appreciate her kindness and goodness, and therefore also cut their hair to make themselves bald.

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[31] The connotation cannot be excluded with the disease that treatment has been associated with hair loss (cancer), although the evidences of such link is directly not very discreet. An explicit reference to the bald head and cancer appears only in the epilogue in the information about the writer (Why the Hairless created The Hairless?)

Afterwards the Hairless does not seem different and comes out among the people. The readable signal of the abolition of an internal barrier is her appeal to others to let their hair grow again (due to their love to her, not all of them do so). The second signal of the acceptance of her own difference is her relaxed, joyful relationship with the equally bald daughter born to her[32].

The concluding symbolism expresses the need to accept diversity and to seek human values elsewhere. The story itself appears as a symbolic image of a thorny road that precedes the process of someone dealing with their own handicap. Based on the attitude of the royal family and the environment towards the child's otherness, the importance of love, family support and the understanding of society is highlighted in the process.

The author does not look for a cheesy happy ending, in which the protagonist's deficit would be removed. The difference remains permanent, it is also passed onto the descendants, but it is not presented as something that stigmatizes a different man in his eyes and in the society's eyes, but as something that helps one to live a valuable life.

2.3. Disadvantaged backgrounds as a children's story background

The motif of children from disadvantaged backgrounds resonates in the prose of Peter Karpinský[33] *Adela, Do Not Even Try It!* (2016). The focus is on the girl protagonist who, after her mother's mental illness, ends up in a crisis centre led by nuns with her two younger brothers.

The social background of Adela's life with her brothers in the "Yellow House", creates a discreet secondary storyline to the funny episodes from her life. The author uncovers this issue only in fragments, which maybe present constantly, but emerges only through their associations with events in the "Yellow House."

An experienced reader will read in this fragmented thematic storyline the critical situation of the family which influenced all of the three

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[32] The Hairless draws various ornaments on her head until a new fashion has arisen.
[33] Peter Karpinský (1971) is one of the most remarkable contemporary Slovak writers for children.

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children – but particularly Adela and the younger of the brothers. Adela is a girl with boyish manners (she can beat people up, uses "juicy" words), with boyish interests (she likes the most to play football and refuses to wear skirts), and with a developed sense of justice and fairness. Since her mother was unable to take care of her children due to her mental illness, Adela (although not yet mature enough) took the mother's role on herself very often. She became a wild individual who is used to deciding freely, which, in terms of the social institution, may be seen as a rebellion. The impaired speech ability is visible in both of the two brothers. The older brother suffers from the dysorthographia and he endures much suffering until it is revealed. Symptoms of psychological vulnerability[34] are manifested in the younger of the brothers. They are connected with lower language sensitivity and perhaps with some functional changes in the brain. The speech of the protagonist is disordered – she changes, deletes sounds in the testimony, she deforms them as well as the sentence construction, she expresses higher level of naivety in the responses and actions than it is common for a six year old child. The impaired communication skills of these protagonists are evaluated not only by children against the stereotypical background: someone who cannot talk well, does not know the right spelling, is therefore stupid. The signal of Adela's psychological trauma is her bedwetting, but it remains discreetly indicated. In the foreground is rather her desire for her mother, expressed for example by looking at the housing estate, at the house they lived in and from where they had to move, "(…) because the mother quitted taking drugs and started smashing plates and thrown out all sorts of things over the balcony" (p. 7). Apropos, it is like outlining the past life at home in suggestions – its bright sides, as well. Fragmentary memories are triggered by events in the "Yellow House", and these events create the dominant and funny storyline, in which humour and hope has its place. Therefore, the disadvantaged backgrounds remain phlegmatic, and thus

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34 The vulnerability is understood, as interpreted by K. Paulík, as increased sensitivity and reduced tolerance for disturbances that arose "(…) under the influence of negative experiences (…) commencing in early childhood, which can also cause functional changes in the brain" (Paulík, 2010, p. 40)

disturbing in the story's background, but it is balanced out by the optimism of the protagonist. Through various child protagonists, a child reader also perceives how difficult it is for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to identify with his/her social role. The character of Adela is, in this context, an image of an active human being who does not accept her social status as a handicap.

Conclusion

Findings from the three interpretations of selected texts confirm that the authenticity level of a protagonist with some kind of disadvantage is an important prerequisite in the literary story in order to be believed by a reader (and thus have the desired aesthetic knowledge from reading). The presented protagonist in all of the three stories retains a significant level of psychological persuasion. The stories talk to a young reader, particularly how a child lives with some kind of handicap. The answer to the question of how those with a handicap align with these situations remains, with respect to the ontogenesis of the anticipated recipient, either discreetly unsaid (A. Salmela), respectfully moved into intelligible fairy-tale speech (G. Futová), or expressed only by hints as a psychological issue (P. Karpinský).

In terms of the presented attitudes of the intact population towards the disadvantaged protagonists, the analysed proses are an example of the acceptance of otherness . This attitude is obvious from the very beginning in the story of A. Salmela. Particular episodes confirm and interpret it in finer nuances. Therefore, this work is suitable for inclusive education in pre-school institutions. The accepting attitude is developed and gradually visible through an image of overcoming the feeling of self-stigma and common stereotypes in the story of G. Futová. The shift from exclusion to the position of a modulated fairy-tale conflict also makes this principle comprehensible for young readers. The selected story genre and focus on the socially disadvantaged backgrounds have given, in the case of P. Karpinský, more controversy in the attitudes towards otherness and thus the text requires more experienced child reader.

Levels and methods of the presented issue and an educational text's potential are related both to the choice of literary genre and type of presented disadvantage which it talks about. If the types of somatic handicaps would be dressed (Salmela, Futová) in the fairy-tale metaphor,[35] they would accommodate receptive possibilities and a reader's preferences of pre-readers and first-readers: both disadvantages (to be blind, to be bald) are in a way glaring and we can imagine them very easily, respectively simulate them in reality. Through the fairy-tale, children easily understand the otherness of such people – and then it is only up to the adult facilitator to use this knowledge in inclusive education. For that reason, the first two books find a place in the education of children in pre-school and younger school age. For the social disadvantage issue, P. Karpinský has appropriately chosen the (realistic) genre that is imagined from the children's point of view and evaluation of reality. Due to the children's perspective, the witness to traumatic events is huskier, and thus the strenuousness and natural optimism of the children's world is more convex. The prose might be effectively used in inclusive education at higher grades of younger school age.

Within the frame of inclusive education, it seems that high-quality literary works could be used very well in pre-school and early school age already. As stated by T. Vráblová (2014, p. 2) in her works, "(…) that talk about the difficult life circumstances of diseases and disabilities, the life encouragement can be found in everyone without distinction, as healthy as well as sick people. Not in the problem itself because the illness or disability are not the positive factor in life, but in the attitude towards life."

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[35] The symbolic speech of a fairy-tale which includes the obligatory happy ending allows to draw many things in mercifully masked, fantasy imaginative form. Speech of fairy-tale metaphor and children imaginative story might (ironically) make the nature of abstract problem more precise and easier to understand than any other realistic interpretation.

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Current Teaching Strategies for the Writing, Reading and Literary Education of Pupils with ADHD

Abstract: ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) presents challenges that affect everyday life and learning for pupils as well as their teachers and parents. Much has been written and researched when it comes to the disorder, with some conclusions resulting in considerable debate and controversy. Experts on ADHD offer a number of suggestions to help pupils with reading and writing. This paper presents some ways to provide pupils with secondary "fidget" activities, ones that don't distract pupils from the task at hand but actually help them focus on a task. For example, allowing them to listen to music while reading a textbook, having students listen to a recorded version of a book while reading the text, or giving students an extra piece of paper to doodle on while working on a writing assignment. Other strategies that build focus and comprehension, like reading aloud, previewing materials, asking questions, identifying the main ideas, word games and other components of successful reading programs, are helpful at an early age. Even if ADHD pupils master the mechanics of reading, many have trouble understanding the text, making connections within the story, and relating what they're reading to what they already know. Fortunately, reading comprehension skills and strategies can be taught. Children who learn multiple reading strategies, and are guided in their use, eventually choose some to use on their own.

Keywords: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), pupils with ADHD, reading, writing, teaching strategies.

Introduction

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common disorders of childhood and, as of 2006, 4.5 million children have been diagnosed at some time with ADHD. ADHD is described as having "many faces", and as being "one of the most talked-about and controversial subjects in education", causing "heated debates" (Bloom et Cohen, 2006). To be consistent with the existing literature, the term "ADHD" will be used in this paper and will represent the full spectrum of attention disorders.

There has been great controversy surrounding the acceptance of ADHD as a "real" disorder, which is likely related to the lack of a definitive diagnostic test and the perceived overuse of stimulant medication with children. The National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH, 2009) states that ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and into adulthood and involves difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behaviour, hyperactivity (overactivity). The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE, 2009) states that ADHD is a neurological condition that involves problems with inattention and hyperactivity – impulsivity that are developmentally inconsistent with the age of the child and is a function of the developmental failure in the brain circuitry that monitors inhibition and self-control.

However, most professionals use the APA diagnostics manuals, though some use the ICD-10 Classification system of the World Health Organization, which uses the term hyperkinetic disorder. In the most recent edition, the DSM-V (APA, 2013), ADHD is defined as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity – impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and more severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development.

The presented paper will focus on a brief definition of ADHD syndrome and its symptoms in the educational content. Subsequently, effective and verified strategies for the reading, writing and literary education of pupils with ADHD will be presented.

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Psychological, social and behavioural characteristics of students with ADHD

Because ADHD is such a constellation of characteristics, and the chance of the disorder co-existing with one or more disorders that also have sets of related characteristics, the manifestation of ADHD in a particular individual needs to be described across domains.

Characteristics associated with ADHD include distractibility, impulsivity, disorganization, emotional lability, risk-taking, depression, and anxiety. School failure, social problems, and task achievement can result in lower self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, and more impulsive decision-making. Learning disabilities, conduct disorders, anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, Tourette Syndrome, sleep disorders, bed-wetting, and substance abuse may co-exist with ADHD (Barkley, 2005).

Behavioural Models. The criteria listed in the DSM-V describe many of the behaviours associated with ADHD, but a shift from the traditional view occurred when Barkley developed a paradigm that described a chronic lag of 30 % – 40 % in the development of self-control and inhibition and presented a new construct using these descriptors. He recommended making inattention a separate category and proposed a theory of ADHD that has inhibition (which he refers to as the executive system that affects self-control and self-regulation) at the core. The new construct depicts the lag in inhibition (motor inhibition, sensitivity to error, interference control) as the first step in the system that impedes the development of the four executive functions: nonverbal working memory (includes time awareness or "time-blindness"), internalization of speech (includes emotional self-regulation), intrinsic motivation, and "play to yourself" (includes verbal fluency) (Mrug, 2009).

Adaptive behaviours. Low frustration tolerance, emotional lability, bossiness, temper outbursts, dysphoria, low self-esteem, laziness, and irresponsibility are features associated with ADHD. Teenagers with ADHD have more problems with driving and anger control (Richards, 2007).

The social manifestations of ADHD change across the lifespan. Peer rejection and negative imbalance between given and received liking ratings

(children with ADHD liked others more than they were liked) discriminated children with ADHD from children without ADHD. Children with ADHD have fewer close friends and are rejected more often by their peers. Poor social functioning has also been found to be the best predictor of life dissatisfaction in college students with ADHD. Some studies reflect problems with sibling relationships as well as peers. Other studies focused on impaired interpersonal relationships for adults, and a growing body of literature is focused on the workplace and marital problems associated with ADHD (Wymbs et al., 2008).

Though research on the female population is not extensive, a study that compared girls with and without ADHD found that girls were more likely to be inattentive, were 2.5 times more likely to be identified as having a learning disability, and were 16 times more likely to have repeated a grade. Prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders were similar to the data from research conducted with boys with ADHD, though girls were at greater risk for substance abuse. Data on social concerns and problems with interpersonal functioning were similar to the data obtained from research on boys with ADHD. Gender-specific concerns also complicate identification and treatment (Quinn, 2005).

Educational Considerations

For students with ADHD, educational intervention needs to be more intense, engaging, and comprehensive than for students without ADHD. Research has shown that multi-modal treatment is required to support students with ADHD. ADHD is multi-faceted disorder, which requires thoughtful, individualized intervention planning. Assessment should produce a "blueprint" that includes clear descriptions of strengths, weaknesses, and needs so that direct, explicit interventions and appropriate learning supports/accommodations/modifications can be put in place (MTA, 1999).

Research has shown that teacher knowledge is an important variable in identification and intervention planning, but general education teachers may not have extensive knowledge about ADHD. This finding is a major

concern because referral, identification, and intervention planning rely heavily on teacher report. Professional development focused on ADHD takes on even greater importance because experience does not necessarily increase teachers' knowledge of ADHD (Weynadt et al., 2008).

The following practices were identified as being effective across the population: phoneme awareness instruction, practice using oral guided reading with explicit corrective feedback, direct and indirect instruction of vocabulary (with repetition and multiple exposures), and instruction using a combination of reading comprehension techniques. To supplement instructional practices and provide a more positive climate to support ADHD, the Institute of Educational Sciences (in 2008) recommended clearly defining and teaching behavioural expectations, adjusting the physical environment to support positive behaviour, individualizing instruction to foster engagement, and teaching/reinforcing prosocial skills (McIntosh et al., 2009).

Evidence has also supported the use of the following learning supports: action-oriented and highly structured tasks; explicit and multisensory instruction; enhanced stimulation (such as the use of colour); modified assignments (shorter lengths, smaller units); notetaking; adaptive technology; positive reinforcement; and study skills. Providing advance organizers and written summaries, clarifying directions, using preferential seating, reducing distraction, and previewing changes in routines are common accommodations; however, in keeping with the multimodal framework, interventions should be comprehensive and provide "network of support" (Weynadt et al., 2008).

Effective writing educational strategies for the students with ADHD

Too often, students with ADHD get labelled as "problem students." They often get shuffled into special education programs even if they show no signs of developmental disability. Though these students' brains do work differently, studies prove that it doesn't preclude them from

being highly intelligent. That means teachers should pay special attention to help students with ADHD discover their potential and deal with the challenges they face in their learning process (Webb et al., 2005).

As essay writing is both the most common and the most complicated assignment for students, written instruction for students with ADHD requires special efforts. Each step of writing process may present certain difficulties for this group of students. On the next pages we present several strategies and solutions for the most common problems.

Difficulty Concentrating on Assignment

Research proves that ADHD doesn't result in less intelligence, but rather in difficulties controlling emotions, staying motivated, and organizing the thoughts. So a teacher's first task is teaching students to focus enough on a writing assignment.

Solution: Give clear, concise instructions.

When assigning an essay or other writing project, be specific and clear about what you expect. Don't leave a lot of room for interpretation. Instead of the assignment "Write about a joyous moment," include instructions in your writing prompt, such as:

Think about the last time you felt happy and joyful.

Describe the reasons for your happiness.

What exactly made you feel joy?

What can that feeling be compared to?

Make sure every student knows that he or she should come to you directly with any questions. Plan to take extra time reviewing the instructions with students one to one, writing down short instructions along the way (Barkley, 2005).

Difficulty Organizing Thoughts on Paper

Several studies have found that students with ADHD struggle with organizing their thoughts and mental recall. These students can often speak well and explain their thoughts orally, but not in writing.

Solution: Get them organized from the start.

Start each project with a simple note system. Give students the free-

dom to take their own notes and review them together if possible. Have students pay special attention to filing these notes in a large binder, folder, or other method for making storage and retrieval simple.

To help students understand how to organize their written thoughts, teach them mind mapping. A semantic mind map for an essay may include major nouns, verbs, and adjectives, as well as phrases to use in writing each paragraph. Some introductory and transition sentences will also come in handy. Another step after mind mapping is advanced outlining. Begin and end the initial outline with the words "Intro" and "Conclusion" as placeholders. Then have students expanded that outline on their own (Weynadt et al., 2008).

Difficulty with Sustained Work on a Single Task

ADHD can make it difficult for students to focus on long-term goals, leading to poor attention and concentration when the task requires work for an extended period of time.

Solution: Create small, manageable milestones.

Since accomplishing a five-page essay takes a lot of time, you can chop it into smaller, easier-to-manage pieces that can be worked on in rotation. Each piece may be checked separately if time allows. Treating every issue and section as an independent task will prevent students from feeling overwhelmed as they work toward a larger goal (Richards, 2007).

Difficulty in Meeting Deadlines

Deadlines are the things that discourage students with ADHD, as they work on assignments more slowly than their classmates, are often distracted, and tend to procrastinate.

Solution: Allow for procrastination.

It may sound ridiculous, but build procrastination into the writing process by breaking up the work and allowing for extra research, brainstorming, and other activities which diversify students' work while still focusing on the end result (Quinn, 2005).

Spelling Issues

Students with ADHD often have difficulties with writing, especially in terms of spelling. The most common issues are reversing or omitting letters, words, or phrases. Students may spell the same word differently within the same essay. That's why lots of attention should be paid to spelling.

Solution: Encourage spell checkers, dictionaries, and thesaurus.

There are plenty of writing apps and tools available to check spelling and grammar. As a teacher, you can introduce several apps and let students choose which ones work better for writing essays. When checking the submitted papers and grading the work, highlight the spelling mistakes so that students can pay special attention to the misspelled words and remember the correct variant (Wymbs et al., 2008).

Final Editing Issues

Students with ADHD may experience problems during the final editing of their work since, by this time, they will have read and reviewed it several times and may not be paying attention to mistakes.

Solution: Teach them to review their writing step by step.

Take an essay template as an example and show students how to revise it. Go through the editing process slowly, explaining the "why" behind certain changes, especially when it comes to grammatical issues. Assign students the task of revising each other's essays so that when they revise their own final draft, they'll know what to pay attention to and what common mistakes to look for.

Addressing the challenges unique to students with ADHD will help these students find ways to handle their condition effectively and even use it to their advantage. Their unique perspective can be channelled into creative writing, finding new solutions to problems, and most of all, finding, reaching, and even exceeding their goals and fulfilling their full potential (McIntosh et al., 2009).

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Effective reading and literature educational strategies for the students with ADHD

In the first and second grade, most children learn to read. Beginning in third grade, they're expected to read to learn. They may be assigned to find facts on the Internet for a project on aquatic mammals, for instance, or asked to identify plot points in a work of fiction. The ability to extract meaning from written sources — to learn independently — becomes increasingly important with each new grade (Barkley, 2005).

Reading comprehension depends on the ability to quickly sound out and recognize words, which can be hard for students with attention deficit disorder (ADD ADHD) or learning disabilities like dyslexia (APA, 2013).

Even after the mechanics of reading have been mastered, many children with ADHD have trouble understanding the text, making connections within the story, and relating what they're reading to what they already know. Fortunately, reading comprehension skills and strategies can be learned. Children who are taught multiple strategies, and guided in their use, eventually choose some to use on their own.

Read to your student.

Even if a student can read on his own, there is value in reading aloud to him. A child's listening skills are usually stronger than his reading skills, so a student can comprehend more if he reads along silently as you read the book out loud.

Begin with short passages, and extend the time if a student maintains focus. Books on tape, with accompanying texts, provide another way to pair reading and listening (Richards, 2007).

Engage the imagination.

While a student reads or listens, encourage her to visualize the events in the story, creating a picture or movie in his/her mind. After a few pages, ask him/her to describe it (Quinn, 2005).

Show how books are organized.

Textbooks are often structured in a way that highlights and summarizes important material. Show a student how paying attention to captions, charts, section headings, and sample study questions can organize his thinking and provide valuable facts.

When a student reads fiction, train him to look for the five W's: *Who* are the main characters, *where* and *when* does the story take place, *what* conflicts do the characters face, and *why* do they act as they do.

Although newspaper and magazine articles don't always contain a narrative, information about the five W's typically appears in the first paragraph or two (Barkley, 2005).

Ask for predictions.

When reading a book with a student, stop occasionally to ask what he/she thinks might happen next. This requires him/her to integrate what he/she has learned so far about the characters and storyline—and about the way stories are typically organized—to anticipate the rest of the plot.

If he/she's reading a Harry Potter novel, for example, asks what he/she thinks will happen the next time Harry and Draco Malfoy face each other in a Quidditch match. Or get his/her opinion on what he/she thinks author J.K. Rowling will write about in the next book.

It doesn't matter if his/her hunches are correct: Asking for predictions encourages his/her to pay very close attention to what he/she reads. What's more, it helps you gauge just how much he/she comprehends (Wymbs et al., 2008).

Show interest in what your students are reading.

Ask them to tell you about the book or chapter she just finished. What was the main idea? Who was her favourite character? What did they like or dislike about the book? Did it remind them of other stories they have read or of experiences they have had?

If it was a textbook chapter, what did they learn, and how does it apply to what they are learning in school? Having to verbalize what they have read requires them to make sense of it.

If your students are unable to provide a coherent summary, read the book yourself. Engage them in a discussion of *your* favourite parts and characters, and talk about how you connected parts of the story so that it all gets together (Weynadt et al., 2008).

Encourage note-taking.

Have your student keep a notepad or index cards nearby to jot down important information as they read. Note-taking pushes a reader to make sense of the material, and the cards become terrific tools when studying for a test later on.

If a book belongs to your student, permit them to mark relevant details with a pencil or highlighter. Do this together the first few times—it's an opportunity to demonstrate how to pick out important facts.

Does your student learn best visually? Help them create a chart with boxes for the story's setting, characters' names, and major themes and events. Or show them how to make a mind map—a diagram that uses key words, colours, and symbols to represent ideas and information (McIntosh et al., 2009).

Increase word power.

The stronger your student's vocabulary, the better his or her comprehension—and the less frequently they'll put down a book to ask about a word.

If you know that a passage contains unfamiliar words, define them—or have the students look them up in a dictionary—before they begins to read (Mrug, 2009).

Translate figures of speech.

A student with a language-based learning disorder can be overly literal: Reading that a character "took the bull by the horns" or "looked like he'd seen a ghost" can stop them cold.

Help your student understand that a phrase that seems out of context may be a figure of speech. Together, compile a list of expressions and what they mean (Webb, 2005).

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Teach your student to read between the lines.

Point out sentences in which information is implied, and ask him/her to fill in what's missing. He/She should understand that the statement, "George was excited about winning top prize at his school's science fair for the second time," means that George has won the science award once before (Webb, 2005).

Build on background knowledge.

It's easier to understand subject matter that you know something about. Help your student select reading materials that reflect his or her interests, and encourage them to bring their own experiences to their understanding of a book (Mrug, 2009).

Form a book group.

If your student has friends who enjoy similar books, get them together to discuss what they've read or to collaborate on a project, such as a mural or a skit about the story.

Once you've introduced your student to this array of reading comprehension strategies, have him or her write each of his favourites on a separate bookmark. They can use these in schoolbooks—choosing the strategy best-suited to each text—and have a handy reminder to hold their place (Weynadt et al., 2008).

Conclusion

Children with ADHD often have difficulty with reading comprehension because it depends on their ability to quickly sound out and recognize words- something that's hard for students with attention deficit disorder or learning disabilities like dyslexia (Mrug, 2009). Even if ADHD students master the mechanics of reading, many have trouble understanding the text, making connections within the story, and relating what they're reading to what they already know. Fortunately, reading comprehension skills and strategies can be taught. Children who learn mul-

tiple reading strategies, and are guided in their use, eventually choose some to use on their own. For students with ADHD, educational intervention needs to be more intense, engaging, and comprehensive than for students without ADHD. Research has shown that multi-modal treatment is required to support students with ADHD. ADHD is multi-faceted disorder, which requires thoughtful, individualized intervention planning. Assessment should produce a "blueprint" that includes clear descriptions of strengths, weaknesses, and needs so that direct, explicit interventions and appropriate learning supports /accommodations/ modifications can be put in place (MTA, 1999).

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The Educational Aspect of Disabled Literary Characters from the Work of Walt Disney in Primary Education[36]

Abstract: The article deals with some educational aspects of the Walt Disney book version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* that is available on the Slovakian book market. Attention is given not only to the literary-historical context of its origin and the current perception, but particularly to the educational potential which it could have, despite its obscure artistic value. The educational dimension within primary education of the adaptation of a disabled literary character of the bellman will be analysed on the basis of the Disney book (*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*) and its counterpart, the animated Disney movie inspired by V. Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

Key words: Walt Disney, The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, disabled literary character, educational aspect, adaptation, literary character.

Introduction

The education of children in a school setting is traditionally implemented through didactic communication through which some positive aspects, role models and patterns of behaviour are demonstrated. This

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fact has significantly influenced the curriculum of literary education which introduces children, from an early age, to literature and enables them to be raised by literature. The starting point here is a socially accepted idea that stories for children should include positive models of behaviour; i.e. the characters that act in a socially acceptable manner and are rewarded for it. The stories should neither describe unacceptable behaviour (such as violence and rudeness that could be imitated by children) nor include or display scary facts that could be perceived as frightening by children (Nodelman, Reimer, 2003 p. 86, 92).

It is undisputed that literature has an important place in the life of a child and that it becomes one of the best educators over a long-term horizon. From the child's point of view, it is the most joyful and sponta-neous form of education (Poliak, 1973). According to Klátik (1962), the artistic word can, in addition, prepare the most fruitful grounds for any educational activity. Therefore, everything relevant for a pre-school age is conveyed through the literature and artistic text in kindergarten, and, according to Nezkusil (1972), one will not find anywhere else than in chil-dren's literature such a strong expectation that it is the hero who helps the reader to overcome the problems of his intellectual maturation and helps clarify the difficult situation of interpersonal relationships and fa-cilitate his integration.

It is hard to imagine fiction for children without literary heroes and characters. Children's literature, as observed by Tichý (1972, p. 335), must always have its personal hero. The main character, or literary hero, has an irreplaceable position in the reception by children. According to Šubrtová (2008, p. 289), the literary character is the narrative construct through which the sense of the literary work is revealed to the child recipient, due to the anthropological dimension of the literary character. At the same time, in the view of the author, a literary character can function as a defin-ing sign in the development of genre awareness in children.

The place of literary hero in literature for children

From the aspect of literary-theoretical discourse, the literary hero is seen as a character that could exist in different situations (Compagnon, 2006; Ronenová, 2006). In other words, the character does not exist from the logical point of view, does not live in the real actual world, but only in the cultural practices of pre-school and junior school age children; the teacher can always refer children to the qualities of well-known literary heroes (Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Pinocchio, etc.). The child needs its hero from a very early age because everything he does is in a way interconnected, so the child is involved in the formation of his own personality. According to Rúfus (1997), children think through their whole person as if there were no distinction between the soul and body. Therefore, nothing can replace the actions of a hero in the literature: a hero affects those around him immediately and irreplaceably, the integrated effort of the child to assert and develop his own personality (Tichý, 1972). Naturally, the question arises as to what should a literary hero of the children's literature be like, if he is to enrich the child-reader. In the case of the main protagonist, it holds that he can be the focal point of both positive and negative qualities – this fact is not so important, however, as the important fact is that he lives his life in the artwork as a character who enters into relationships and conflicts within the overall context of the literary work. According to Tichý (1972), it is the resulting vector that has to have a positive value: positive literature is a precondition for the child-reader. It is such literature that, in its artistic result, does not reaffirm life decay, destruction or escapism, but affirms and provides for both progress and advancement in the self-formation of a human being.

Yet, nowadays, the fact that a literary hero, despite his fictional character, can prepare a child for coping with authentic real-life pain is somehow overlooked. K. Chukovsky (1963) captured the ethos of children's literature in that its mission is to develop humanity in man – the unusual ability of man to worry about someone else's suffering, as well as to enjoy the delight of others and to live out someone else's fate as his own. The child, in his view, cuts himself off from his own egocentric interests and

feelings by engaging in an imaginary life of fictional entities (people, animals and objects). Literature for children and youth is therefore the liveliest and most attractive when it conveys a human fate, i.e. both tragic elements and happiness at the same time, while, as remarked by J. Šimůnek (1972) and I. Nagaiev (1974), with the future and brightness as the only legitimate foundations. Therefore, literature for children must not evoke a fear of the future but trust in the future.

In the scientific discourse, the period of childhood has neither been considered as ontogenetically inferior nor as the preparatory phase for something more substantial to come for quite a long time. Nevertheless, childhood is unique in some way since, in its early stage, the inner life of the child is murky, unenlightened and unclear. Therefore, the child needs to understand himself, to generate distance from himself and return back by means of a different path. Against the background of a literary character, the child looks beyond himself, considers, evaluates and criticises himself only to return to himself in a clearer form (Helus, 1972). Both literature and the literary hero, as aptly noted by Šimůnek (1972), are involved in what can be called the social attunement of the child: a child verifies, against the background of a literary hero, the fact that s/he is a human child.

The Walt Disney Company

In the context of the 1990s, alongside a massive influx of commercial fairy tales, a book appeared in the domain of Slovak literary translations with a hero that could be characterised as peculiar, not taken for granted, and, from the aspect of "a societal demand by kids", partially taboo. This was a book adapted from the Walt Disney production of *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1996, translated by Stano Martin).

Books from Walt Disney productions usually enter the market immediately after the release of their feature film (their counterpart) to maintain and multiply their audience share and to keep the film in circulation for as long as possible. In this regard, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*

is listed among the numerous other similar books, a fact which notably reflects significant changes in the children's book market after the November Revolution of 1989. This significant change also affected publishers in Slovakia in just a few years following November 1989, as noted by Stanislavová (2010). After the advent of the free market economy, the area of culture and books for children became the domain of making profit. It meant that Slovak publishers started to focus on publications of a commercial nature and trivial titles, mostly of foreign provenance, among which Walt Disney productions had an indisputable lead. Foreign literary titles of dubious value have found their place on the shelves of Slovak bookstores, libraries, and also Slovak children's rooms for nearly thirty years since November 1989.

It is no secret that Walt Disney productions are primarily a matter of commerce and marketing. They are driven by the need to target its viewers, readers, or, in terms of the market language – its consumer and customer. The prolific and immensely attractive productions of Walt Disney films are known to children all over the world. The literary-historical discourse in Walt Disney's home country indicated that this production must be viewed through the prism and context of the historical period in which it originated – around the middle of the 20th century. For this reason, even its older animated movies enjoy considerable attention amongst film and literary critics, especially due to the fact that Disney's feature movies confirm the values of mainstream society about what is normal and desirable (cf. Nodelman, Reimer, 2003, p. 142). Today, it is socially, culturally and politically incorrect to use the voices of African Americans when dubbing monkey characters (*The Jungle Book*), to depict Italian characters as aggressive and dull people who speak broken English (*Pinocchio, Lady and the Tramp*), or, in the animated film industry, to present a gender biased stereotypical view of a man and a woman as the only acceptable model of happiness (*Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast, Snow White, Cinderella*).

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Disney's film and literary version of *The Hunchback of Notre--Dame*

A fairy tale feature film about *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* was, in 1996, the thirty fourth animated feature film from the Disney production line. It belongs to the so-called animated classics of Walt Disney. As mentioned above, its eponymous literary form appeared on the children's book market in Slovakia soon after the release of the film, mainly for marketing and commercial reasons. The film version of the story is not the original production of the American company. It is a story inspired by a classic work of romanticism by Victor Hugo – *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. It is therefore just a film adaptation – an adaptation of the original work that sketches the classic literary work for a young audience; an audience which had not been targeted as addressees of Hugo's original work (Čeňková, 2006, p. 87). The Disney adaptation of the book, like most adaptations, transformed the original work into a version which is simpler, from the textological point of view, in terms of genre (novel – a fairy tale), composition, theme and language (cf. Štraus, 2005, p. 10). In the ideal case, an adaptation should not deprive the original work of either its values or artistically. However, the practical adaptation of the Disney production brought some adjustments that were intended and deliberate. The most fundamental of these is the one that R. Schnickel (in Nodelman, Reimer, 2003) denotes with the term *Disneyfication*. It means the deliberate changing of the story's ending that is in contrast to the original; in the Disney version, neither Quasimodo nor Esmeralda dies, both of them find their version of happiness (Esmeralda in the arms of Phoebus, Quasimodo at the hands of the cheering crowd who hail him as a hero).[37]

The Disney adaptation of the romantic piece *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* by V. Hugo is an example of such an adaptation that can be considered a modification in the conception of Z. Klátik. In such cases,

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[37] The Disney version of *The Little Mermaid* by H. Ch. Andersen is also a Disneyfication because the princess ends up in the arms of the Prince – also in this case the ending differs from the original story by Andersen.

the original literary work does not appear in the children's literary version in its authentic form. There are two possible formats of adaptation: one which retains its authentic form (for the adult reader), the other which is adapted for the child reader. Such a reduction, typical for adaptations for a young audience, may, to some extent, alter the original nature of the literary work, as happened in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.[38] The modified artworks thus reveal two faces of the literary text. In the case of Disney's treatment, the tension between Disney's surface structure of *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and the deep structure of Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* can be felt more intensively by the adult viewer (and reader if s/he reads it to a child). *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* film could therefore be classified as a type of adaptation specifically referred to as *ad usum delphini*.[39] This adaptation of a literary piece with a dramatic storyline and tragic finale executed a deeper invasion into the original structure to befit the expectations placed on animated movies for a young audience. Referring to the words of D. Karpatský (2008, p. 12), we can consider the substantial invasion into Hugo's novel as a Disneyfied adaptation of the original work for a medium other than a book – for a film; moreover, a feature film of a fairy tale nature primarily for a child viewer. Some production features also played a role here (e.g. the limited length of film screening) which requires elimination (omission) of unattractive or inappropriate parts from the adult point of view, and, amplification (extension) of those passages that accommodated the storyline to the expected receptive needs of a young audience.

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[38]   There is also a "child" version of the fairy tale *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Don Quixote* by M. Cervante or *Gulliver's Travels* by J. Swift.

[39]   Libor Pavera (2002, p. 9) states that there are many literary works, originally intended for adults, routinely adapted for children and youth. Such modified texts were given a specific name after the French heir to the throne – *ad usum delphini*. It was used to mark special editions of classic authors for the purpose of the education of the young heir to the throne of France. The so-called "inappropriate passages" were removed from it. Today, this term is used to denote works from which something was deliberately omitted for some reasons (usually moral).

Educational aspects of the Quasimodo character

Psychological theory posits that a hero should have, especially for pre-school aged children, certain characteristic features of the child – it means that a hero should be small and helpless, and, by virtue of his powerlessness and helplessness, be triumphant in some form. The requirement for a hero in children's literature should therefore be, according to Helus (1972), as follows: a hero should embody something moderate and weak that can only attain the desired position through the power of his powerlessness.

Despite their "deficiency", the characters of children's literature should not be deprived of the most important thing that is referred to as a dimension of life. A child should not lose confidence in life and confidence in the world as such, despite all of the darker sides of a literary text faced by a literary character (and with him, hand in hand, faced by the child itself). As a result, there must always be optimism for a child, even if the story informs us about the negative things and phenomena that a child knows from real life. The adult reader can cope with adversities by his own means because his concept of life has already matured. However, a child, as stressed by Šmahelová (1972), must always be given a helping hand in this regard. This is also the case in more demanding stories in which a hero, or his close person, is confronted with death, a phenomenon which is not very common in literature for children. It is natural that the subject of death in the plot is refused emotionally by the child because it contradicts his expectations. A hero, however, should not be formed only by the demands of the child, because he would then only confirm the child's childishness and would thus stand in the way of a child's prospective development and progress. The child also expects, to some extent, that the author provides him not only with what fulfils a child's horizon of expectations (H. R. Jauss), but also something personal, i.e. a personalised knowledge of the world (elements of the adult world from the child's perspective). In this way, an interesting process is secured within literary communication resulting in the fact that the reader will never be bored, which could happen if the storyline were predictable (Nezkusil, 1972). A literary

hero has therefore an irreplaceable role in children's literature. He is a factor of an artistic text of irreplaceable importance not only for a child reader (and their enjoyment of various fictional worlds), but also for the full-valued integration of the child into the context of the real world.

Disney's Quasimodo is both a film and literary hero with a disability; even though he does not meet the basic psychological requirements of being small and weak, he is "at least" ugly. Highlighting some negative features of the character and exaggerating his ugliness related to physical disability reveals, in the case of Quasimodo, the hidden meaning of more significant human values. One must not perceive the ugliness, distortion and physical disproportion of the literary hero in the context of the artwork as violating aesthetics. In fact, the defacing of Quasimodo fulfils a semiotic function – it carries a potential of significance. The utilisation of ugliness in the depiction of the main character (including a variety of his deficiencies) can be considered a strategic descent from the higher to the lower position. From the literary-theoretical point of view, such a usage of the deficiencies and deformations in a film and literary work is a creative process of reduction that can be enriching for the reader from the pragmatic point of view, emphasising an inclusive and pro-social attitude (Rakús, 1996).

Quasimodo, the central character of the story, is a type of outsider and outlaw for his physical features (and for societal-social status too) who is confronted with potentially stronger and more powerful enemies. He is similar to and appealing to the young audience of both the film and the book, so children can identify with him more easily. The triumph of Quasimodo as the underdog, outsider or outlaw represents, in the Disney treatment, a type of narrative scheme that a child must familiarise themselves with in the process of education in order to learn how to apply it later in a new situation. Since children's reception is affected by their prediction, familiarity with the narrative scheme of the triumph of the oppressed provides children with some scaffolding in the text reception. It is exactly this permanent exposure to the narratives of underdogs and outsiders which helps children to develop a sense for this type of stories (cf. Nodelman, Reimer, 2003, p. 119, 147).

The adaptation of an original artwork, according to Žilka (2011, p. 22–25) is always at the interface between the original work and the new one. According to the author, two principles are involved in its realisation: the creative and the reproductive. If the creative principle prevails, the outcome is a new artwork. Less interference with the thematic composition of a text is a characteristic for the so-called reproductive genres. If, within the outlined context, Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (both the film and book versions) are assessed and compared in relation to Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, one must inevitably conclude that the fairy tale's film adaptation by Disney applied a creative principle in relation to the original book by V. Hugo. The book adaptation of the fairy tale, for which the movie is a counterpart (not the original novel) has, on the contrary, adopted the reproductive principle.

The teacher should draw children's attention to a comparison of both the film and the book adaptation – using only a book version of the story is didactically undesirable, particularly for its strikingly kitschy elements. The creative principle of the Walt Disney Company was manifested in several ways in the feature film version:

- transformation of the genre (romantic novel to animated fairy tale),
- film production features (visual literacy):
  - focus (focal point),
  - light (colour, shadows),
  - angle (points of view),
  - framing (proximity – distance, large – small),
- combination of image, word and music – rendered as musical,
- characters modification (child's aspect):
  - Quasimodo (elimination of deafness, single-eyed),
  - Phoebus (transformation into a positive character),
- modification of structural significance:
  - Disneyfication – happy ending,
  - elimination of the theme of death and grim elements (the relationship of Quasimodo-Esmeralda, Esmeralda-Phoebus),
  - amplification (situational humour, gargoyles, updated insertions).

By comparing film and book versions of the story, the teacher can develop in children the desired understanding of intertextual and inter-media connections within a story. This develops the awareness of how the story changes when rendered in two different media, which helps children realise that the book version does not reach, by far, the standard of the film:

- visual kitsch (Kulka, 2000, p. 131):
  - emotionality,
  - identifiability,
  - shallow associations,
- reduction of the reduction (lameness, trivialisation and "unintel-ligibility" of conflict),
- Reader's Digest-like treatment of textual components (resem-bling a commentary for visually impaired addressees),
- weakened/eliminated motivation of characters acts,
- insufficient expressive level of illustration (paradox).

The literary hero as a character with a particular name is essentially a non-existent entity. Even though he does not exist in the real world as he is a fictional character, one can pronounce that he exists in the logical and ontological spheres of literary or film worlds. The character of Quasimodo does not exist from the logical point of view, but he exists in our cultural practice (Ronenová, 2006, p. 129, 135). Based on this, the teacher can make educational references to his qualities, enabling the literary and film character become a part of the so-called collective memory (the term of U. Eco).

Conclusion

Disney productions are well established in today's world of children's literature. The question is, however, to what extent educators are able to pass on knowledge to children that reading a book as well as "reading"

a movie is – as one writer once said – a gift that should not be wasted. In another place and time, R. Rolland noted that we never read a book, but we read ourselves in books – in order to regulate, discover and know ourselves. In what manner can the child and the Disney's production fit into it? The answer is hidden in Disney's film and literary characters that do not introduce children into "childish" situations; as a child does not normally experience such situations in the real world. A child's situations are primarily of a human nature. Trashy and naive literature is apt to create childish situations very easily, through children characters, but – in the words of Šimůnek (1972) – to uncover something specifically human in a "child's" situation is quite a demanding task, which artistically impoverished literature for children is unable to fulfil. The Disneyfication of human situations, in the domain of film and literature, is certainly not a hallmark of artistic truthfulness. Nevertheless, the film adaptation of Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* is a work that deserves attention in contemporary art for children – even in an educational setting. Through the comparison of the Quasimodo story in both film and book adaptations, the teacher can develop the desired awareness of how the same story changes when rendered in different media. The trashy literary version has disqualified itself in this educational comparison.

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Preparing Teachers for the Profession with Regard to the Individualization and Differentiation of Instruction

Abstract: The idea that the pedagogical mastery of a teacher and his/her increasing expertise are based on his/her ability to reflect on his/her own practice is widely recognized in the world, irrespective of the concepts and approaches applied to teacher training. It is shown in this paper that fundamental change is needed in terms of the aims, means and processes of prospective teacher education. They should turn away from science popularisers to experts capable of fostering the complex social and personal development of students (and not only in relation to the group of students with specific problems). We present a connection within the capacity of the individual (student, teacher and training teacher) to think critically and conduct professional reflection on pedagogical practice.

Keywords: critical thinking, reflection, continuous teaching and pedagogical practice, individualization and differentiation of instruction.

Introduction

One of the main outcomes of school education is to make students cogitative individuals, who will contribute to solving the problems of society and creating its values. Thinking is the highest form of cognition and is composed of a number of thinking operations. It is conditioned socially and culturally, closely related to language and speech. From the

pedagogical point of view, the development of thinking, mainly the critical one, is considered as a priority of school education. Society should, through the school as a social institution, strengthen the level of responsibility. The school cannot afford to treat this as a "dead letter" and create only an illusion of reform. On the contrary, the school should accept the offered challenges and contribute to the changes that are associated with school reform.

The ability to think critically is generally regarded as one of the objectives of education and training. American researchers M. Scriven and R. Paul (1993) stated that critical thinking or reasoning is an intellectual process based on a conceptual grasp (conceptualization), analysis, synthesis and information evaluation. The above mentioned authors created an institute in California (USA), that is devoted to describing and teaching the various aspects of critical thinking. We offer their overview with the aim of improving the understanding of the complexity of critical thinking. Reasoning (inference) includes four aspects: elements, features, standards and skills. According to the authors, any critical thinking or reasoning includes a certain number of the following elements: an objective, a problem, a referential framework and perspective, information, key terms, premises, drawing inferences and implications. The main features of critical thinking are humility, courage, responsibility, discipline, empathy, curiosity, persistency, integrity and spiritual independence (an individual does not recognize any higher authority than himself and does not place any value higher than his own opinion). The quality of the opinion is recognized if it is logical, complete, clear, accurate, specific, plausible (probable), consistent, deep, broad, adequate, proper, appropriate and significant.

The current definition of the term critical thinking, from the cognitive point of view, is also described by the Slovak authors Stríženec (2010) and Ruisel (2008, 2011). According to them, the content of critical thinking extends to such areas as scientific thinking, formal and informal logic, probabilistic thinking, and evaluation of the information quality, generation and selection of alternatives and objectives, and argument analysis providing access to adequate solutions.

The quality argument, according to Turek (2003), should contain a statement (the key idea), the statement justification and the evidence in support of particular statements. It is in the ability of argumentation where we can find the link between the philosophical and cognitive approach to critical thinking. The lack of ability to justify one's own attitudes or behaviour, or weak use and validation of acquired knowledge in solving life problems reduces the importance of information and knowledge itself.

We file critical thinking (together with the competency to solve problems and think creatively) under a set of capabilities that belong to the key competencies of the teacher. Critical thinking means the assessment of new information, to form opinions, to evaluate the significance of information for our own needs and for the real needs of the society. The ability of reflection on one's own action is a fundamental capability of teachers. I understand reflective thinking as a part of the critical thinking process referring specifically to the processes of analysing and making judgments about what has happened. It is a competence needed for personal growth, self-development and self-improvement in education. Teachers in primary education, in accordance with the description of their field of study, should possess professional competencies that enable them to carry out their profession effectively. They should have theoretical knowledge about the key factors and processes of socialization and upbringing, about the cultural connections of anthropogenesis and its psychological interpretations. They can demonstrate their awareness of the content of basic general education and transform it effectively for didactic purposes. They possess the ability of didactic education projection in basic areas of human culture, with an emphasis on the initial acculturation of children, as well as the enculturation of immigrants and members of culturally disadvantaged minorities. Finally, they should fulfil the requirements of the State Educational Programme and ensure that the educational activity is focused in the way that the school and school education operate as fair systems where all students have the equal opportunity to develop their potential.

How can a primary school teacher create suitable conditions for the equal education of all Slovak citizens, including ethnic minorities? How to

achieve the aim that educational programmes are constantly improved and upgraded based on functional mechanisms of feedback and evaluation? How to promote the participation and cooperation of all participators in education, including children and students?[40] How to ensure that collectively-oriented training in terms of the content and also process aspect contribute better to the development of individuals and respects their individual differences? How to plan the learning activities of students, taking into account the fact that not only training content, but also the very form of knowledge mediation plays the same role in the development of the mental functions of an individual, his/her relationship to reality and the planning of one's own activities? How to establish a learning environment that encourages individual thinking and the creation of the personal philosophy of the world stimulates mutual discussion and the exchange of opinions and beliefs? In other words, what can teachers do in order to turn classes into intellectual centres stimulating students' thinking and preparing them seriously to a future independent life in a democratic society?

Innovation in the professional and practical training of future primary school teachers

The regional education reform depends on the quality of teachers who are prepared by the universities. The efficient output of a university graduate is necessarily associated with changes of quality of his/her preparation. It is expected from students, as future teachers of primary school, to bring innovations into the educational system. The systematic emphasis and training of critical thinking skills in school practice would help students to become aware of the requirements and the needs of modern society. It is therefore necessary to make students aware, already during their studies, that the organization of teaching activities, at present, cannot count with the same development potencies of all students

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[40] See www.minedu.sk: Objectives proposal of the National Programme of Education and Teaching Development THE LEARNING SLOVAKIA.

with whom a professor works. It cannot be ascribed uniform and universal contents and processes in any situation of learning in all students equally. It is desirable that they should think about which content of the student's curriculum would be mediated and what are his development conditions. To the forefront comes the requirement of the importance of acceptance of an individualized developmental plan for some individuals and their supporting activities.

Pedagogical practice is a direct source and means of knowledge for students of pedagogical faculties. It should therefore be designed to lead them to learn from their practical experiences through their conscious self-reflection. The continual pedagogical teaching practice is the result of students' theoretical and practical training and the protraction of their learning practice in three previous semesters. A second-year master's student works continuously during five weeks in the educational environment of one class. S/He continuously teaches all subjects and has the possibility to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the workings of a primary school, the functioning of the classroom, the teacher's work and the opportunity to apply in the study of acquired knowledges and skills to solve authentic educational situations. Students learn to handle tasks close to the demands of the real teaching process, including extra-curricular activities followed by methodological and expert analysis, feedback from the teacher trainer, didactics in the field and a reflection on one's own didactic skills and pedagogical capabilities (competencies relating to teaching behaviour that make a decisive contribution to the effectiveness of education). The mentioned pedagogical practice is focused on the complex development of a teacher's competencies, and students gain teaching experience in the overall context of the class and functioning of the school, followed by a verification of their own teaching competency (Kosová et al., 2015).

Continual teaching practice creates the conditions for university students to acquire professional experience and opportunities for linking theoretical knowledge and practical skills to form their individual style of professional thinking and actions that, among other factors, will enable university students to:

- continuously implement teaching in one class, applying methods of instruction, strategies, teaching concepts, means and tools that are optimal and effective for a given level of education;
- recognise the diverse needs of pupils, accept expressions of their individuality within the classroom, identify the specific features of students' learning, specific educational needs and apply the elements of differentiation in teaching and the means of pedagogical diagnostics in the process of one's own learning.
- analyse, evaluate, organise and generalise their own teaching experience and knowledge in confronting feedback from teacher trainer and didactics in the field to get an objective self-image.

The reflexive nature of continual teaching practice creates the conditions for students to acquire professional experience and opportunities for turning theoretical knowledge into their own concepts of professional thinking and acting by allowing them to:

- professionally evaluate their teaching activities and develop pedagogical views;
- improve their skills of meeting the individual needs of primary school children and differentiate the instruction according to their educational needs;
- understand the concept of a comprehensive social and personal development of a child;
- verify their potential for the teaching profession.

The university character of teaching training suggests that students develop their capabilities through the intellectual work that resembles scientific pedagogical thinking. This results in the ability of the student to think critically. Unfortunately, the analyses of results, carried out by the international PISA (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012) and PIIAC (2015)[41] measure-

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[41] The study of OECD PISA is searching for the educational outcomes in terms of the labour market requirements (meaning the functional literacy of students in terms

ments, indicate the significant evidence that higher cognitive functions, particularly independent, evaluative and critical thinking, are not adequately developed in our school conditions. This deficit is also brought to universities by secondary school leavers. We believe that if the monitored variable is not developed by students in the conditions of primary and secondary school, they will not be able to think critically even as graduates or as individuals included in social life.

The international research conducted by PIIAC is investigating, in particular, how citizens of different countries are prepared to meet the new challenges of a knowledge-based society. The direct skills measurement of respondents in adulthood brings incomparably more advantages over previous attempts to measure adult literacy based on their qualifications. A diploma or certificate of completed education does not say enough about the real potential of the respondent, not even to mention documents and certificates acquired many years ago. PIAAC will in particular help to better understand the effectiveness of educational systems in the development of basic cognitive and working skills. PIAAC is an ambitious programme that not only maps the competencies, but also tries to evaluate how skills are related to the socio-economic successes of individuals or particular countries. The research also provides information about the extent to which the education systems are successful in conveying the necessary competencies and how it is possible to increase the effectiveness of educational policies.

For this reason, it would be interesting to find out the status of the critical thinking level among students of MA degrees in the field of primary education and to analyse to what extent has this capacity directly affected the application, implementation and realization of individualized and differentiated teaching provided through school practice.

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of the lifelong education theory) and it is focused on students in the last years of compulsory education. The project PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessement of Adult Competencies) is an international assessment of adult competencies. Both projects PIAAC and PISA complement each other. PIAAC explores the following development of the acquired competencies, while PISA verifies what and how students learnt.

We suggest the following procedures and instruments for the observation, analysis and evaluation of the quality of the student's activity in the studying area:

- To identify and analyse the level of critical thinking among 60 students of MAs in the field of the teaching for primary education (instrument: test/ The Watson-Glaser test of the critical thinking evaluation).
- To establish the means of pedagogical reflection and self-reflection application of the individualized and differentiated instruction to the continuous teaching and pedagogical practice (instrument: standards for students).
- To develop a measuring tool to verify (observation, analysis and evaluation) the level of achievement standards (instrument: the recording sheet for observation).
- To present the standards and procedures for the assessment and evaluation of the recording sheet for observation to the students.
- To evaluate the level of achievement standards in relation to the application of individualization and differentiation of instruction by students on continuous pedagogical practice (direct observation of the educational process at the primary level of training schools, the reflection of the trade didactics, self-reflection of the student, talks with students).
- To encourage developing of students' ability to evaluate their teaching activities, to innovate pedagogical views and to improve their teaching capabilities aimed at capacity to meet the individual needs of students and differentiate instruction according to their educational needs (instrument: reflective discourse).
- To show a correlation between the competence of the student to think critically and his ability to implement and reflect individualizes and differentiated teaching on continuous pedagogical practice (statistical processing, analysis of the results).

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA)

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) captures the abilities that are frequently used by people of primary decisions. This is particularly the ability to recognize weak arguments, misconceptions and assumptions, illogical conclusions and dubious opinions. The development and specification of the test has lasted for more than 50 years. The test was systematically subjected to more progressive and experimental analyses and resulting improvements, which were based on careful consideration of the theoretical background as well as practical utilization. In the later American editions of the tests that have been pioneered in the UK, detection of critical thinking was regulated and tailored to the selection procedures of a number of large companies and organizations. The final result is Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) of 1990. It comprises subtests and items that are based on the most recent conceptualization of critical thinking. The test is intended for the professions of primary decision-making.

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) is the most commonly used in five areas:

- As a means of prediction. It allows the estimation of the potential success in certain types of professions, which are known that critical thinking plays an important role in them. It is used mainly in the selected proceedings.
- As a measure of performances in critical thinking in the context of training programs in the industry, management and state administration. Such programs have the task of developing the ability to think critically. Test results are also take into consideration in the selection of those programs.
- As a measure of performances in critical thinking when evaluating the results in school and other educational programs. It provides objective evidence of critical thinking skills development due to the completion of a course or training.
- As a means of psychometric evaluation. These are situations in which the knowledge of the critical thinking characteristics of an

individual can contribute to the success of any coaching and de-
velopment.
- As the research tool in identifying and determining of the rela-
tionships between critical thinking skills and other abilities, fea-
tures and phenomena.
- As a means of self-esteem and achievement of greater personal
effectiveness. The test result can provide an individual the ob-
jective picture of his abilities and possibilities for futher develop-
ment and thereby create a basis for further professional career
and its planning in many years.

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) is a series of five
testing tasks, each of which requires the application of analytical thinking
abilities. Such capabilities are applied in tests to statements represent-
ing a wide range of written and spoken materials, which are frequently
encountered in everyday situations in work or while studying. The tasks
include such information that is commonly found in newspapers, maga-
zines or the media and include comments and arguments that should
not be accepted by a person blindly, and therefore to accept without crit-
ical evaluation. The test consists of the following five subtests:

Test 1 – Opinion
Evaluation of the opinion's validity created on the basis of a series
of factual data.
Test 2 – Recognition of presumptions
The identification of the untold presumptions or assumptions of
sets of arguments.
Test 3 – Deduction
Determining whether certain conclusions result from the infor-
mation contained in these statements and premises.
Test 4 – Interpretation
Considering the facts and decision of eligibility about gener-
alizations and conclusions that are drawn on the basis of the
given data.

Test 5 – Arguments rating

> The distinction between the arguments that are, based on given problem, strong and substantial and those that are weak and insubstantial (CTA, 2000).

Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) elicits responses to two different kinds of content. Some of the tasks require the assessment of critical statements from the candidate on a neutral topic such as weather, scientific facts or experiments and other topics that generally do not cause strong emotions or prejudices in people. Others, roughly in a similar logical structure, concern political, economic or social issues that evoke strong emotions, biases and prejudices in many people. Controversial materials were deliberately used with the intention of giving a partial picture of the individual ability to critically assess the issues that may arouse strong feelings or prejudices. When interpreting the test score, it is important to remember that the critical thinking skills can be trained to a certain extent. The authors of the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CTA) define critical thinking as a combination of attitudes, knowledges and skills.

The Teacher Trainer– co-creator of efficient and reflective teaching practice

The most valuable thing that a supervising teacher can give to a beginning teacher or a university teacher, or a teacher to a student for his/her entire professional life, is a tool for constant reconstruction of their own educational theory – i.e. support the development of his/her ability to professionally evaluate their own teaching activity, and thus innovate their own pedagogical views and constantly improve their own teaching skills.

The ability of a student to reflect on his/her own teaching activity during school practice should become an important part of the self-improvement of a future professional. Professionalization is understood

as an equivalent and at the same time as a condition of improving a teacher's work (characteristics and criterions). Professionalism as a construct pertaining to the professional community (status aspects, attitudinal attributes and values) and professionalism as term relating to pedagogical performance (knowledges, capabilities and strategies).

The conceptual basis of professionalization is a professional standard based on competency profiles of particular teacher categories derived from the learning aims, values and school aims. The competency profile of a teacher trainer, as "teacher of teachers", is formed of competencies at 2 levels:

– pedagogical and didactic knowledges and skills related with the teaching of a particular subject or field;
– knowledge and skills of how adults are teachers (students of teaching) and how they are made competent teachers (mentoring).

The Methodological and Pedagogical Centre (educational and methodological institution of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic for the further education of pedagogical staff) has been devoted to working on the professional standards of teachers in Slovakia in recent years as a directly managed organization of Ministry of Education. The created draft of professional standards for training pedagogical staff (training teachers) contains a competency profile that is divided into 3 dimensions:

- dimension – Student during pedagogical practice:
  – competency 1.1: identify individual training and personal needs of student during pedagogical practice,
  – competency 1.2: identify learning styles of students on pedagogical practice.
- dimension – Training process:
  – competency 2.1: manage the training process.
- dimension – Professional development:
  – competency 3.1: plan and realize one's own professional growth and self-development

– competency 3.2: identify the role of a specialist, the school and the school environment.

A competency profile should be formed of competencies (proven capabilities) in three areas:

- Competencies oriented to knowledge of the university student:
  – identifies the educational, personal and social needs of student;
  – accepts an individuality of each student;
  – takes into account the psychological and social learning factors of students;
  – reflects factors affecting student perspective on the learning process.
- Competencies directed to the development of professional teaching abilities of students:
  – create the conditions to transform the student role to the teacher role (leading to accountability, autonomy, professionalism);
  – present a didactic expertise;
  – project, analyse and evaluate the student's educational activities;
  – create a supportive and responsive environment for student;
  – develop professional and social abilities of student (support the cooperation and team spirit work, awareness of responsibility to the profession and institution);
  – demonstrate the effective use of ICT in education;
  – provide individual assistance to student.
- Competencies directed to the self-development of the trainee teacher:
  – uses tools of self-diagnosis and self-reflection;
  – uses reflection, evaluation and feedback from others (methodology experts, faculty teachers for further professional growth and self-development;
  – innovates teaching and makes it more efficient;

– coordinates cooperation with faculty, creates collaborative projects with various partners;
– demonstrates proficiency in the field of tutoring and mentoring.

The continual educational programme for the training of primary school teachers[42]

The programme proposal is based on the above mentioned competency profile of training teachers and is regarded as specialized education.[43] The career system for teachers in Slovakia contains one of the career ways for obtaining specific professional competencies (specialised functions) that are needed to conduct specialized or manage the professional competencies of teachers with specialized extra pay or extra pay for management being awarded. The specialized competencies of teachers are associated with the performance of career positions in the career system expressing their gradation (teacher with attestation), function (director, deputy director) or specialization (class teacher, teacher trainer, induction teacher, a specialist in the education of disadvantaged pupils and so on.).

It is obvious that the professional specializations circuit is a dynamic system that has to respond to the current and prospective needs of schools. The creation of new positions with specific tasks besides teaching can increase the career differentiation horizontally. The career level that distinguishes the extra responsibility is the access to more demanding career levels, requiring more responsibility and the narrower selection. However, it also brings a higher status and remuneration. It is mainly about the

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[42] This document was developed under a developed project Innovation of Professional and Practical Training of the future teachers 002UMB/2013 that is also financed from the state budget of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak republic.
Note: the author of the paper was a member of the working group. For more, see: www.minedu.sk.

[43] For more information see: www.minedu.sk.

positions of mentors, tutors, coaches, counsellors and others whose widely branched system of support for teacher development is required.

The structure of the programme contains the following components.

Name of the education programme:
    Specialised education for training teachers
        Names of modules:
        – M1: Training teacher as a mentor.
        – M2: Training teacher as an expert on teaching.

Target group:
    teacher in accordance with §13, paragraph a-f, of the legal code no. 317 / 2009 of the Law on pedagogical and professional employees and on amending and supplementing of Acts.

Required entrance education:
    according to §7 paragraph 2 a) and b) of the Act no. 317 / 2013 Law Collection on the educational and professional employees and on amending and supplementing certain acts and first attestation test.

Conditions for the programme placement:
    – professional curriculum vitae;
    – 5 years of pedagogical practice;
    – during the implementation of specialized education, must assist university students during pedagogical practice.

The Graduate profile:
    A graduate with a specialized education will be qualified for a career position as a teacher trainer. S/He will acquire competencies in planning, implementation and reflection of the professional development of future teachers in the form of effective mentoring via education. He will confirm his expertise in the profession, as well as in the pedagogical, psychological and professional spheres.

Organizational form of education:
>   combined (full-time and distance learning)

Range:
>   100 hrs. (60 hrs. full-time and 40 hrs. distance learning)

Didactic plan and curriculum:
>   The aim of the programme is formulated in terms of the proven profit of the education participant, the development of his/her professional competencies, in order to be realistic (achievable in scheduled time of education), specific (unambiguous in interpretation), quantified (includes data on the time, range), measurable (can be ascertained if it is fulfilled, i.e. if the participant acquired the planned competences). Partial objectives derived from the main objective of the programme as expected demonstrable competencies of the participant designed to reflect the sequence in level (quality) acquired competencies (knowledges, skills, attitudes) based on the output level of aim. They are formulated based on activity (operations) of the participant of the educational process, contain an active verb with the subject matter. Particular tasks have criteria of the tasks completion, tasks indicators that are manifested externally in the activities of education participants.

Main objective:
>   to acquire the professional competencies of the pedagogical employee that are necessary for the performance of specialized activities in the career position of a teacher trainer (see Table 1).

Specific objectives:
>   Graduate of specialized education will be able to demonstrate expertise as a mentor that he can:
>   – identify educational, personal and social needs of a student;
>   – take into account the psychological and social factors of students' learning as adults;

   – reflect factors affecting the student's perspective on the learning process;

   – create conditions for the transformation of the student's role to the teacher's role (lead to responsibility, autonomy, professionality);

   – design teaching activities of students;

   – analyse and evaluate the pedagogical activities of the student;

   – create supportive and responsive environment for students;

   – develop professional social capabilities of students (support co-operation and ability of team work, awareness of responsibility to the profession and institution);

   – demonstrate the possibilities for the effective use of IT in teaching;

   – provide individual assistance to students;

   – use different tools of self-reflection;

   – present didactic expertise;

   – innovate teaching and make it more efficient.

Table 1. Basic characteristics of the educational programme

The module name	Educational content	Methods and Forms	Full-time lessons	Distance lessons
M1 Training teacher as a mentor	Specifics of adult education Needs identification of adult learners Pedagogical practices system for pedagogy students Self-development strategy of teacher trainer Mentoring, coaching, tutoring, characteristic--supervision, principles, utilization	lecture analysis of scenarios direct presentations in practice active forms of learning	30 hours	20 hours
M2 Training teacher as an educational expert	Didactic and pedagogical-psychological analysis of lessons Reflection and feedback Interpersonal communication Student evaluation during practice, evaluation criteria Cooperation, teamwork in school Action research in the classroom Didactic processing of innovations in the field, learning subject Teaching modernization with ICT Creation and the use of learning resources	training of capabilities in specific teaching examples / models /samples / situations creation and presentations of didactic demonstrations active forms of learning individual counselling	30 hours	20 hours

Tasks for distance learning:

To the video sample of the lesson conducted by the student during pedagogical practice, the teacher trainer will prepare and submit:

– written comments on the preparation of the student's lesson, on the pedagogical practice related to the educational process and the didactic adaptation of curriculum;
– written feedback to the student of the presented lesson.

Duration: min.18 months

Completion of the specialized education:

– the presentation of the mentoring capabilities of the teacher trainer in the pedagogical practice in front of supervisor (the attendance of supervisor on the observation of student teaching and giving feedback to the teacher trainer);
– written final paper in the range of 12 pages thematically oriented to reflection on one's own interventions provided by the student (the work is reviewed by 1 reviewer).

Profile of the guarantor:

– under the Law;
– proven expertise in the management of student's pedagogical practice, management of training teachers and/or schools and school facilities.

Lecturers' profile of the accredited programme:

– under the Law,
– can demonstrate expertise or competencies in the education of pedagogical employees in the area of mentoring, tutoring, supervision, and didactics of the field.

Data on material and technical support:

– technical equipment (cameras, data projectors, data repositories, laptops for teachers, etc.);

– webspace for the data storage and experiences sharing;
– teaching integrated environment (LMS, Moodle), other software equipment.

Conclusion

The educational specifics of professionals who work with people (including teachers of primary education), is that the preparation for the execution of their professional duties cannot be achieved merely by theoretical study. The professional component of their preparation is based on acquiring the skills, capabilities and competencies for dealing with real situations that can be achieved only by practical experience. However, the practical training procedure is not enough for a real understanding of the situation. And if this is only routine, it does not enable pupils to improve their own professional practices. This requires the reflection on practical experience at a certain qualitative level – the specific integration of learned theory and proven practice.

The fact is that the development and genuine transformation of professional thinking and student's acting is not possible without a substantial share of practice and its reflection. It places undergraduate studies of teaching in a new context and gives it a totally different dimension. Currently, from this point of view, it does not have sufficient qualitative level. This level rests not only in the fact that the university should provide more practical training, but also that this practical experience should be constantly accompanied by professionally guided reflection, gradually structured and supported according to its phases. It should also be specifically guided to hacking of rooted gestalt and encourage the students' need to retreat into new theories, to understand and to change. At the university, it should be done not only during the analysis of the conducted lesson, as it is today, but in the course of all didactics, different practices and special colloquia after the practice. However, it assumes at the same time that the university teachers who provide academic studies and trainee teachers must prepare differently for such reflection.

For the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, from the Manifesto of the Slovak Republic Government for the years 2016 – 2020, the task arises to design the National Programme of Education and Teaching development, that will cover objectives and aims of the ten terms of the academic studying in the Slovak Republic in the field of teaching and education (www.minedu.sk).

It is stated in the proposal that the teaching profession is difficult and has its own specifics. Its successful conduction puts many demands on the teacher's personality. Their fulfilment is not possible to ensure automatically only through university preparation. Therefore, not only should the difficulty and quality of undergraduate teacher training be increased, but also the requirements regarding candidate selection should be stricter before entrance to university. As an integral part of the entrance exam what should be tested is their pedagogical knowledge, general knowledge, study conditions, psychological, personal and other specific capabilities for teacher's work, as well as their motivation for the conduction of this profession. The content of education is balanced in the area of theory and practice at the university. It reflects the requirements for teacher training in accordance with their new role and strengthening of individualization in education and the teamwork cooperation of educational-specialist teams.

The material presents the efforts of educational policy-makers in Slovakia to ensure qualitative and reflective teaching practice through a developed network of faculties and university training schools with experienced practicing teachers with whom the university cooperates systematically and deliberately. The Manifesto of the Slovak Republic Government for the years 2016 – 2020 promises to support the establishment of laboratory schools: experimental schools with a specific curricular status and relationship to the university, which might create a space for the activities of teachers and students of the university and might serve as a laboratory of educational innovations created in close cooperation between school teachers and university teachers.

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REPORTS
& REVIEW

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Review of the Publication:
Nauczyciele wczesnej edukacji wobec problemu diagnozowania specyficznych trudności w uczeniu się
[*Early School Education Teachers' Approach Toward the Problem of School Evaluation of Specific Difficulties in Learning*]

The obligation to evaluate difficulties in learning stems from the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport as of April 30th of 2013 on the terms of providing and organising psychological and educational assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions (Journal of Law of 2010 No 228, item 1487). This obligation, imposed by a legislator and not an expert, raises the question of how this evaluation should be conducted. It also forces a reflection of whether the teachers who are responsible for the evaluation of children are appropriately prepared to do so.

It is very important to provide early and proper evaluation for the development of every child in terms of specific difficulties in learning. It gives an opportunity to balance out their educational, and which in turn has an impact on successful achievement at further educational levels.

The responsibility is placed mainly upon the teachers and, in order to conduct a proper evaluation in the first place, teachers have to obtain the appropriate background knowledge and skills. It is necessary for teachers to have knowledge, for example, about normal child development at a certain age, as well as the skills to identify and name any deficiencies if they occur. Furthermore, teachers ought to know which evaluation tools should be used.

Anna Szkolak decided to tackle this problem in the book which is the subject matter of this review. The monograph prepared by Szkolak is dedicated to the evaluation of specific difficulties in learning such as: dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthographia and dyscalculia.

This publication is coherent and clear as a whole. The structure of the text is legible and it allows the reader to swiftly gain an overview with regard to its content. The work consists of an introduction, a conclusion and 9 chapters, of which 7 are theoretical and 2 others are empirical. This division is appropriate and fully justified, showing that the author analysed the subject very thoroughly, choosing the most important contents which are functional and justified in a critical and selective way.

The first chapter contains the history of research on developmental dyslexia and dyscalculia all over the world as well as in Poland. Starting with the reflection on historical background of this problem, the author shows that it is not a new issue. Research on learning difficulties goes back for more than a century (the first work about dyslexia was published in 1896) and it is still worth carrying them out despite such a long history. The teachers' readiness to evaluate children's difficulties correctly is still an open question and this is why the research reflection on this subject is justified and can be useful in filling the scientific gap in this area of knowledge.

In the introduction Szkolak decided to answer the following research questions: "how teachers of early school education are prepared to recognize and provide developmental and educational needs which are the effect of specific learning difficulties; what skills teachers have in this field and if they undertake any professional training to improve them; if it is motivating for teachers that it's a governmental obligation to identify such specific learning difficulties? [trans.]".

Review of the Publication: Nauczyciele wczesnej edukacji
wobec problemu diagnozowania specyficznych trudności w uczeniu się
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REPORTS & REVIEWS

Selected Aspects of Diagnosis and Bibliotherapy in a Child Education

An additional aim the author acknowledged while writing the book is to give it a simply practical dimension by creating a tool which will be supportive in "teaching practices of teachers [trans.]".

All of the the goals were fully attained. To fulfil the first claim, the empirical part of the book was used in chapter 8 (author's own research methodology) and chapter 9 (teachers of early school education toward problems with evaluation of specific learning difficulties in the light of their own research). Empirical research was planned and carried out properly on an appropriate number of subjects, with the usage of methods of work (method of diagnostic survey), research tools and techniques (questionnaire for teachers of early education, interviews with headmasters of primary schools, study of teaching documents and observation registers of researched teachers) suitable for the goals of the book.

Due to the research conducted it was possible to verify the effectiveness and usefulness of the tools used for the evaluation of specific difficulties in learning. According to the teachers questioned, tools like: *Test for aloud reading techniques* [trans.] invented by J. Konopnicki, *Set of reading and writing tests for I-III grades of primary schools* [trans.] by T. Straburzyńska and T. Śliwińska, do not correspond to current standards and norms. Research also proved that it is necessary to make teachers aware of the importance of experimental methods in recognition of abnormality in psychomotor development. The next problem is a teachers' lack of faith toward the usage of new tools such as: *Risk Scale of Dyslexia* [trans.] or *Risk recognition questionnaire of specific reading and writing difficulties of children who start school in the 1st grade* [trans.] published by M. Bogdanowicz.

To fulfil the last claim, it is crucial to focus attention on information included in chapters 4 (evaluation model of dyslexia [trans.]), 5 (evaluation model od dyscalculia [trans.]) and 6, where the review of methods and tools to early evaluation of specific learning difficulties can be found.

It is worth mentioning that this book has a special value because thanks to it the reader has a chance to improve his or her own knowledge about dyscalculia, that is the impaired ability to learn grade-appropriate mathematics. This problem is little known in Poland and Polish

authors have not yet manged to deal with it in a satisfactory way and this is why the information gathered by A. Szkolak is worth paying attention to, despite the fact that it is strictly regularized.

The author of the book claims that there is a need to modify studies from pre-school and early school education in evaluation and fulfilment of developmental and educational needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties in such way that graduates will not only be able to evaluate children properly but to recognize the risk of occurrence of specific difficulties in learning and make an effort to eliminate those problems as well. Research shows that: "teachers can identify mistakes committed by pupils, however they are not able to point out the reason behind them, nor the type of disorder which the child has. Teachers are apprehensive about the unambiguous identification of dyslexia, dysorthographia, dysgraphia and especially dyscalculia [trans.]". That is why the author highlights the importance of teacher training by taking part in workshops, courses, trainings, post graduate studies, etc.

The review would not be complete without a consideration of its weak points and looking at the theoretical part of work, it would perhaps be more significant if more foreign language sources had been used.

Evaluating Szkolak's work it is important to state that it is interesting, well written and valuable based on the information included. It is very useful for both theorists and practitioners working on this problem and could be interesting for teachers in early school education and pedagogy students of pre-school education. Moreover, it could find a use for all those who would like to find some information and understand the difficulty and importance of the early identification of any risk from a child's dyslexia, dysorthographia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia.

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