



Preface

Within the context of current changes in terms of policy, a look on the issues of education and professional approaches to children, youths and adults with sensory disabilities as well as speech and communication impediments turn out to be important. Present provisions of education law in Poland provide disabled pupils with equal access to the general education system, specify the scope of psychological and educational aid, consideration for special education needs, and also indicate persons responsible for their implementation. The present publication is made up of ten articles. In the first article, Marzenna Zaorska describes the educational and professional situation of persons with sensory disabilities. Referring to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations, indicates many barriers as well as problems experienced by the circles of disabled persons. The article contains opinions from groups of the deaf and the blind concerning the limitations, signs of discrimination, as well as suggestions for the education system as well as concerning work and employment. In the next article, Małgorzata Czerwińska presents the specifics of the information sphere for persons with sight disabilities as a component of their information culture. Focusing on the systematic analysis of documents and long years of participatory observation, the Author presents legal solutions concerning the access of visually-impaired persons to information, the conditions of the orientation

and cognitive sphere of a blind user of information, the issues concerning the provision of information. The musings of the Author conclude with indications of limitations in the access to information by the visually impaired, which provokes on the one hand suggestions of practical solutions, but also on the other hand research proposals concerning multi-aspect analyses of the information culture of the visually impaired in Poland. These issues are in part followed on by the article by Kamila Miler-Zdanowska, the aim of which is the presentation of modes of movement of the visually impaired, with particular focus on the use of modern technologies. The article also includes a classification and description of electronic aids used in spatial orientation and independent movement by the blind. It shows off the advantages and difficulties stemming from the use of such modern devices. It also presents interesting research projects dealing with the design and testing of new technological solutions in Poland. Issues of visual disabilities are also dealt with by Izabella Kucharczyk. The author presents here quite interesting own research, the purpose of which was the determination whether there exist differences spanning school achievements between visually-impaired and well-sighted pupils during adolescence, and whether there exist relations between the self-awareness of emotional states in visually-impaired pupils during adolescence and their school achievements. As the author stresses, the awareness of, understanding of and ability to analyse the experienced emotions is very important in the process of shaping of relations with people, establishing relationships, acquisition of competences useful in adult life. Self-awareness of one's own emotional states permits self-development, improves the feeling of one's own effectiveness and assessment.

Issues of education and upbringing of persons with hearing disabilities are introduced by the article by Magdalena Olempska-Wysocka on the current trends in the choices of forms of education of pupils with auditory disabilities. The objective of the article is the presentation of changes in the education of persons with hearing loss and hearing disabilities that have occurred within the last seven

years. Tendencies in the education of children clearly indicate a departure from special education forms against general and integrated education. These changes constitute however a challenge both for teachers, parents, as well as the pupils with hearing disabilities themselves. The article also stresses the importance of socio-cultural and emancipation issues, as well as the idea of bilingual education, which are eagerly advocated by people with hearing disabilities in Poland. A further article, by Magdalena Magierska-Krzysztoń, indicates that strong hearing disabilities emerged in the prenatal period or at birth are disabilities that significantly hinder full and fruitful functioning in a society of people without hearing disabilities. A particular consequence of a deep hearing disability is the lack or noticeable delay in the development of speech and language acquisition. The author had examined 54 children who were deaf from birth who were sequentially provided with bilateral implants. The implantations were done at the Otolaryngology and Laryngeal Oncology Hospital of the Poznań University of Medical Sciences. The obtained results show a steady, dynamic improvement of hearing as well as linguistic and communications abilities in the studied group.

The next article, by Aleksandra Rożek, presents issues of functioning of well-hearing siblings of people with hearing disabilities at different stages of development. The article also indicates factors decisive in terms of building positive relations between the siblings of the listener, and the deaf person. As the author stresses, they may imply the psycho-social functioning of hearing in adult life. Significant is accordingly the question, how to proceed in order for well-hearing siblings to get as much advantages as possible from their family and social situation, and what to do in order to minimise possible losses due to the fact of having siblings with impaired hearing.

The next article, by Renata Marciniak-Firadza, indicates important aspects concerning word-building competences of children with intellectual disabilities. As the author stresses, a description of understanding (acquisition, decoding, interpretation) and creation

(expression, encoding) of word structures by children with minor intellectual disabilities, and the description of how do word and formative structures exist in the language awareness of such children is of paramount importance within the context of development of their language and communications competences; they also permit e. g. responses to questions important for many educators, are intellectually-disabled children able to work with the same school curriculum as the others, gain knowledge from textbooks, participate in tests and competence examinations according to unified rules.

A detailed logopaedic diagnosis of a child with a moderate-level disability as the basis for effective therapy – a case study – constitutes the next article; it stresses the role of speech and language as the factors most strongly influencing one's intellectual and emotional development. Various speech impediments that hinder daily life communication and the satisfaction of basic needs contribute to disturbances in social functioning. The author – Mateusz Szurek – notes how important a detailed logopaedic diagnosis is, as it constitutes the foundation of subsequent therapy. He presents it based on a child with a moderate-level intellectual disability. The last part of the work includes a speech therapy programme.

The study is rounded off by an article by Noah Bar Gosen on model teachers. As the author indicates, over the years, researchers have been searching for the definition of a good teacher, attempting to describe his perfect properties. Through qualitative research, the author was able to discern between five key properties that determine the uniqueness of teachers: a holistic view of the pupil, the identification and satisfaction of the pupils' individual needs, focusing on relations between teachers and teachers, creative teaching, the feeling of the mission and an inspiring personality. As the author stresses, the key to better achievements in terms of education rests at the hands of teachers.

The volume is amended by a report from the scientific symposium „*Current tendencies in the support of the development of children and their families*”, which took place at the Faculty of Educational Studies

in Poznań, and a review of the book by M. Bystrzanowska (217), *Selective mutism. A guide for parents, teachers and specialists* (Mutyzm wybiórczy. Poradnik dla rodziców, nauczycieli i specjalistów), „Impuls” publishing house.

Volume editor
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