



IWONA CHRZANOWSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success for inclusive action regarding particular groups of students, and the professional experience

ABSTRACT: Iwona Chrzanowska, *Opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success for inclusive action regarding particular groups of students, and the professional experience.* Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 20, Poznań 2018. Pp. 91–114. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

Currently, the idea of inclusive education is perceived as a model of education, far exceeding the idea of inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream education. It is a vision of a school aimed at considering the needs of all students, i.e. those who exhibit no severe developmental disabilities, with special educational needs, including gifted individuals. Additionally, the scholars of inclusive education agree, that the process is neither easy nor simple. One of the determining factors indicated, is the attitude of teachers towards the very idea. Therefore, a research idea arose, aiming at examining the opinion of teachers regarding the subject of inclusive education, as a potentially dominant form of education. Recognising at least some of its determinants seemed essential. The following article focuses on two of the aforementioned: types of institutions, where the teachers are employed, and the teachers' professional experience. The research encompasses integrated preschools. It seems that the experience of teachers of such institutions proves particularly significant for recognising the chances and dangers of inclusive education, within the context of Polish integration experience. The two professional groups

distinguished, with substantial and minor professional experience, allow to examine the perspective of inclusive action.

KEY WORDS: Inclusive education, integrated preschool teachers, educational chances

Introduction

The idea of inclusive education in most countries, is perceived similarly in reference to philosophical principles. These are as follows: supportive environment, participation, positive social relationships, and feelings of competence¹. According to the idea of inclusive education, it is essential to recognise the educational needs of all students, instead of certain groups, particularly those that, due to some endogenous and/or exogenous barriers, are threatened with any form of marginalisation or social exclusion. Elizabeth Walton states, that recognising the causes of the educational exclusion phenomenon may contribute to creating the opportunities of accomplishing the premises of inclusive education, with its principal claims of full participation in the highest quality education. However, according to the author, currently, many teachers and parents are unable to imagine a school free of social stratification, particularly, stratification related to students' abilities².

Mel Ainscow performed an analysis of the solutions employed in various countries, presenting an abundance of the variants of inclusive education, depending on the capabilities, social and cultural context, economic conditions, the system of beliefs, values, as well as, geographical and geopolitical determinants. Therefore, one may speak of inclusive education:

¹ T. L. Gallagher, S. Bennett, *A Canadian Perspective on the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in High Schools*, [in:] *Inclusive Education for Students With Intellectual Disabilities*, R. G. Craven, A. J. S. Morin, D. Tracey, P. D. Parker, H. F. Zhong (eds.), North Carolina IAP – Information Age Publishing 2015, p. 26.

² E. Walton, *Dismantling the Empire of Educational Exclusion*, [in:] E. Walton, S. Moonsamy (eds.), *Making Education Inclusive*, Cambridge, Scholars Publishing 2015, p. 13.

- concentrated on individuals with disabilities: children and youth with special educational needs,
- concentrated on students who leave school prematurely, due to disciplinary reasons,
- concentrated on students' various needs resulting from issues that appear within groups that are threatened with social exclusion,
- concentrated on the conditions of teaching and of preparing the school to accept students of various needs – “school for all”,
- concentrated on the needs of all students – “education for all”,
- Concentrated on the development of a systemic approach towards education and society³.

Examining the above, one may notice, that only the last listed proposals give reason to believe, that in result of applying solutions, the dangers related to “neglecting”, “omitting” the needs of any individual within education, may be minimised.

The attitude focused on a child/student with developmental disorders, is most often characteristic of countries, that are at the beginning of the process of inclusion. According to the analyses performed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education⁴, some countries implement the idea of a school for all, while others are still focused on students with disabilities, students with special educational needs, as well as, students, whose behaviour may disturb the functioning of a class. However, the term “special educational needs” was introduced for the very fact of discarding thinking about deficits, and rather, focused on supporting teaching and providing education opportunities. Unfortunately, very often, an approach emphasising on deficits and negative labels is still dominant⁵. The very concept of special needs is still perceived as pejorative, within the categories of deficits.

³ M. Ainscow, T. Booth, A. Dyson et al., *Improving Schools: Developing Inclusion*, London, Routledge 2006.

⁴ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2011, p. 16.

⁵ B. Norwich, *A response to 'Special Educational Needs: A New Look'*, [in:] Terzi L. (ed.) *Special Educational Needs: A New Look*, London, Continuum 2010.

In the Polish legal system regarding education, the concept of special educational needs had not been defined. Regardless, everyone, including officials, applies this category, creating more or less comprehensive catalogues of students, that would fall within its scope. In the ordinances of the Ministry of National Education, focusing on the psychological-pedagogical education, over a dozen groups of individuals (students) were indicated, that should be taken under care and supported. Among them, there are individuals with disabilities, social maladjustment including ones that were threatened with maladjustment, as well as, students who return to the country, students from cultural minorities, and gifted students. Such diversity of needs, regarding developmental capabilities, is to be an acknowledgement of the necessity of taking care of each student who, temporarily or continually, to a greater or lesser extent, for a certain period of time, or for the entire lifetime, will require specialist assistance, adjustment of conditions, or organised education (care). Such broad understanding of special needs, not necessarily associated with developmental deficits, but, simultaneously, not negating the fact, that a student with e. g. a disability, exhibits particular, specific needs in regard to the conditions, organisation of education, allows to reason within the categories of education for all. However, one should realise, by paying attention to the critique of the complete, unconditional educational inclusion⁶, that education for all is not a synonym of inclusive education. It is rather an assortment of such systemic solutions (support and financing), that would provide each student with the most adequate education, considering his needs. However, the process must be accompanied by reasoning free of stereotypes, that does not generalise, with actual awareness and the belief, that each individual has the same rights, including those regarding choosing own path of education. Such choice must be guaranteed.

⁶ P. Cooper, B. Jacobs, *From inclusion to engagement: Helping Students Engage with Schooling through Policy and Practice*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2011, p. 9.

Methodology and research results

The research results presented below are a part of a broader project regarding the opinion of teachers of different education institutions, on varying levels of education, regarding inclusive education. Ultimately, the project focused on three types of institutions: mainstream, integrated and special institutions; as well as, on three levels of education: preschool, as well as, classes I-III and IV-VI within primary and secondary schools.

An assortment of variables regarding the examined teachers, was considered, including: professional experience, finally not included in the analyses published in the monograph dedicated to the subject, i.a. due to the amount of research material and analyses. In the presented research results, I shall refer solely to teachers from integrated preschools.

Diagnostic poll, was the applied research method. Despite its critique, alleged low credibility, particularly, due to its instrumental exploitation (e. g. election polls), it seems to be the best method of acquiring original data, in order to describe a population too big to be examined directly. Obviously, in order to be able to consider the research results as credible, a number of conditions must be fulfilled, regarding **e. g. sampling (size, selection, representativeness), and the applied research instruments (correctness, objectivity, unambiguity, verifiability).**

The following article refers to the research results acquired using two research instruments: the first focused on examining the opinions of teachers regarding whether the idea of integrated education, in reference to generalised groups of the participants of education, students: without disabilities, however exhibiting special educational needs (**mild developmental disorders**), gifted, with disabilities⁷, is a good, beneficial solution. The instrument contains 6

⁷ The groups of gifted students and students with disabilities were purposefully isolated. The aim was to not lose track of gifted students, in the broad understanding of special needs. The purpose of isolating the group of students with disabilities, was to, indirectly, to encourage teachers to think of a group of students with SEN,

statements with the option to choose: *yes, I have no opinion, no* and a single open question, where the respondents had the possibility to indicate groups of students, other than the presented⁸.

The second instrument was focused on the chances for the success of **inclusive education** in regard to the particular developmental disorders and **mild disorders**. The participants were given the choice of five different answers: *5 – very good chance of success, 4 – good chance of success, 3 – medium chance of success, 2 – poor chance of success, 1 – no chance of success*. An assortment of twelve groups of children/students with developmental disorders and mild disorders was established: with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disability, with partial and severe hearing impairment, partial or severe visual impairment, children with autism, children with the Asperger syndrome, children with movement disorders, multiple disabilities, communication disorders, and chronic conditions, to which teachers were to respond in regard to inclusive education.

Firstly, it was assumed, that a preschool/integrated school teacher possesses generalised knowledge regarding the functioning of i.a. a school child exhibiting each of the aforementioned groups of developmental disorders and **mild developmental disorders**, acquired through higher education, professional training, or acquired via professional experience.

Secondly, the limited assortment of groups of children/students, in regard to the recognition of chances and dangers within the framework of inclusive education, was related to aiming at isolating groups of students of explicitly varied educational needs, due to the specifics of their functioning. Including all groups of students, as presented in the ordinances by the Ministry of National Education regarding the psychological-pedagogical assistance⁹ would

however, not associating it with developmental dysfunction – consultation of instruments with a body of expert judges.

⁸ The respondents decided against this option.

⁹ Ordinance of the Ministry of National Education for 10 March 2017 regarding the principles of psychological-pedagogical assistance in public preschools, schools and institutions, Journal of Laws 25 August 2017, pos. 1519.

result in a **much more elaborate, and, including e. g. the levels of disability, and an even more complex classification**¹⁰. An arbitrary choice was made, however, supported by the functional characteristics of individuals with particular levels of disability, to isolate e. g. two, instead of four groups of children/students with hearing disorders. Additionally, it was assumed that some of the groups of students, as indicated by the Ministry, e. g. **threatened with** maladjustment or educational failure, were never actually threatened with educational exclusion as a separation education, within the Polish solutions. Therefore, they were not included in the poll regarding the chances and dangers of inclusive education. Instead, the **research**, was based on literature analyses regarding the issues of inclusive education, that, in most cases, indicate the issue of inclusive education of children/students with disabilities, severe disorders and mild developmental disorders¹¹.

The unusual distinction between the professional groups into: up to 10 years, and 24 and more years of professional experience, also demands an explanation. Primarily, the aim was to include three commonly included groups, within this variable, that is, teachers with up to 10 years of experience, teachers between 11 and 20 years of experience and teachers with more than 20 years of

¹⁰ The necessity of limiting the number of discussed groups, in regard to the chances and dangers of inclusive education was related to common sense judgement of assessing the chances of acquiring respondents, with assuming voluntary participation in the study, as well as, assuming the measurement of a number of additional variables with the use of the remaining study instruments.

¹¹ In order to eliminate at least a portion of possible errors in constructing polls, such as: assuming prior knowledge or understanding (the respondents exhibit competences allowing them to respond to questions, and make statements regarding the raised issues); formulation of mutually contradictory, suggestive, ambiguous, culturally unadjusted questions, or creating a flawed scale of answers in regard to multiple choice questions, avoided due to the construction of poll instruments with the assistance of expert judges, specialists in regard to the subject matter. The assistance led to the omission of the "Autism spectrum disorder" term, and to the isolation of two groups of students - with autism and with the Asperger syndrome.

experience. However, despite the randomised choice of recipients, from among 215 integrated preschool education teachers who participated in the study, teachers with less than 10 years of experience made 51.16% of the group, while teachers between 11 and 20 years of experience – 6.51%, and teachers with more than 21 years of experience – 42.33%.

According to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, the age profile of teachers seems to be an increasing issue in numerous countries¹². It was shown that, e. g. in a part of the 25 countries examined, the majority of teachers would be of pre-retirement or close to retirement age. Other countries already exhibit a deficit of teachers, while elsewhere, the recruitment of candidates for studies leading to the teaching profession, becomes an increasing issue. Only in a small number of countries (the wealthiest), teachers are recruited from the best graduates, as they were offered exceptional employment conditions.

Unfortunately, the low status and the lack of social respect for the teaching profession, especially regarding teachers of early education, remains to be the primary issue. Young people, even if they start to work in their profession, quickly resign, and the possibility increases proportionately to the shortage of their professional experience. The balance of requirements, effort, difficulties related to the profession, is at loss in comparison to the profits. The main issue is the lack of understanding of those who regulate education, an understanding that would be long-term and with perspectives e. g. in a situation of the population decline, systemic reforms of education financing (including teacher salaries).

Therefore, the research results will be presented in a layout unusual for analyses related to professional experience, in two groups of teachers, with 10 or less years of experience, and with 24 or more years of experience. Therefore, two groups were created, with less experience, and with rich (even 36 years) experience. The middle

¹² European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Teacher Education for inclusion in Europe*, Odense, Dania, EAREU ze SPE 2011, p. 76.

group of teachers between 11 and 23 years of experience was excluded, as it constituted 11.6% of the respondents.

These two diverse groups, vary the most in regard to the examined aspect. Particularly the second group consists of teachers who have remained within the system since the time, when the idea of classrooms, integrated classes and the changes related to the re-definition of the very concept of disability related regarding the paradigmatic change, were introduced. They worked when segregated teaching of children/students with disabilities was common, they were the teachers who formed the reality of integrated education, and experienced its successes and failures. Teachers with less experience were employed during the time of the popularisation of inclusive education; one should mention that the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* had been signed in 2006¹³, and from that moment on, preparations and implementations of changes introduced by the aforementioned, were performed in signing countries. Therefore, one should verify, whether and to what degree, these experiences affect the teachers' opinions and their perception of inclusive education as a chance/danger regarding the education of students, including individuals with disabilities.

While describing, in the context of methodology, the aim of the performed analyses, one may state, that it is the determination whether and to what degree, the opinions of integrated preschool education teachers, regarding the mutual teaching of children within the scope of mainstream institutions, are determined by their professional experience.

The questions that may be posed regarding the aforementioned aim may refer to two primary issues.

The first issue focuses on the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding whether inclusive education is a solution beneficial to particular, generalised groups of children/students: **without disabilities**, however, exhibiting special educational needs

¹³ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm>.

(**mild developmental disorders**), gifted students, and finally, for children/students with disabilities. Regarding the aforementioned, the following specific questions were formed:

- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children functioning within developmental norms, the so-called able children?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with special educational needs, that exhibit mild developmental disorders?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with special educational needs, that exhibit talent, the so-called gifted children?
- Whether and how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience, differ, regarding the belief that inclusive education is a solution beneficial to children with disabilities?

The second issue is dedicated to the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success in inclusive education of children/students with developmental disorders and mild developmental disorders placed among twelve homogeneous groups (based on the type and the severity of the disorder), including: mild intellectual disability, moderate and severe intellectual disability, with partial and severe hearing impairment, with severe visual impairment, children/students with autism, with the Asperger syndrome, with movement disorders including aphasia, with multiple disabilities, communication disorders and finally, with chronic conditions.

The specific issues regard to the following:

- Whether, and if so, then how the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, determined by their work experience,

differ, regarding the opportunities of each group in inclusive education?

In reality, the above question contains twelve questions, that differ only by the fact, that they relate to homogeneous groups of children with a developmental, mild developmental disorder.

- Regarding which groups of students with developmental, mild developmental disorders, according to the opinion of teachers with 10 or less years of experience, is there a higher chance of **success regarding inclusive activities**?
- Regarding which groups of students with developmental, mild developmental disorders, according to the opinion of teachers with 24 and more years of experience, is there a higher chance of success regarding inclusive activities?

One should indicate, that the analysis results are based on a study conducted on a group of 190 teachers from integrated preschools¹⁴, from Dolnośląskie, Mazowieckie, Łódzkie and Wielkopolskie Voivodeships. The regions were selected, so that they would be comparable in reference to i.a. economic variables (e. g. the employment rates in each region are similar – Dolnośląskie and Łódzkie: 53.2% and 55.1%; Mazowieckie and Wielkopolskie: 57.1% and 55.2%)¹⁵.

The analysis of research results regarding the first primary issue allows to conclude that teachers of integrated preschool education with less experience, in regard to each group of children: able; with special educational needs, exhibiting mild developmental disorders; with special educational needs, exhibiting talent, as well as, children with disabilities, are more often convinced, find inclusive education beneficial.

¹⁴ The group of 190 consists exclusively of individuals with 10 or less years of experience and with 24 and more years of experience, the group between 11 and 23 years of experience constituting the 11.6% of the entirety of recruited respondents from integrated preschools, were not included in the analyses.

¹⁵ *The economic activity of the Polish population, 1st quarter 2016*, Warszawa, GUS 2017.

Both teacher groups assume, that inclusive education is the most beneficial solution for students with special educational needs (SEN) (exhibiting mild developmental disorders), followed by able students. The differences determined by professional experience appear in regard to two remaining groups.

Table 1. The opinions of integrated preschool education teachers regarding the educational opportunities of particular groups of students in inclusive education, and professional experience (percentage values)

Professional experience	Child in inclusive education											
	Able child			SEN child (with mild developmental disorders)			SEN child exhibiting talent (so-called gifted child)			Child with disability		
	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO	Y	N	NO
10 years and less (N = 110)	75,5	11,3	13,2	83,0	17,0	5,7	73,6	17,0	9,4	64,2	17,0	18,9
24 years and more (N = 80)	66,6	15,2	18,2	75,7	18,2	6,1	45,4	12,2	42,4	60,6	15,2	24,2

Description: Y - yes (inclusive education is a beneficial solution for the child); N - no (inclusive education is not a beneficial solution for the child); NO - No opinion, I have no opinion (whether inclusive education is a beneficial solution for the child).

According to the teachers with significant experience, inclusive education is the least beneficial solution for gifted students. In search for an explanation for such critical opinions on the opportunities for gifted students in inclusive education, one may indicate a number of possible reasons. First one, is the current lack, within the scope of Polish solutions, of arrangements on the form of the inclusive education model. Whether, and what systems of facilitation for students and teachers will be designed? What amount of financing will be dedicated to education, and, in reality, whether it will be increased, which would allow to expect the inclusive education, requiring definitely more financing, to be secured? Teachers

may worry that with the possible lack of changes in this matter, the main attention of both the legislator and the teachers would focus on students with developmental disabilities, as they constitute the group identified, and that seems to be the case indeed, as requiring the highest degree of support, possibly exhibiting difficulties with meeting the requirements regarding the curriculum, as well as, peer relations, and functioning in a class environment of an ordinary mainstream school. It seems that teachers with more professional experience, are worried, that a gifted student would be omitted in the situation, and that his needs would be even less noticed by the school. It is probable, that the teachers base their opinions on experience with varied groups (classes, **integrated units**). They know how difficult it is to cope with students' varying needs and capabilities. Such fears are additionally supported by studies, i.a. a study by Edyta Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, indicating that the potential of gifted students in school is quickly squandered. It is due to i.a. the lack of competence of teachers, regarding working with gifted students, in a reality where the number of students with severe disorders was lower, than expected regarding the promotion of inclusive education¹⁶.

Some consolation is offered by the fact, that the number of teachers with significant experience, presenting the belief that there is no certainty regarding the opportunities within the inclusive education of gifted students, is much higher than the number of teachers who exhibit opinions, that it would not be a beneficial solution. Therefore, it seems that teachers do not entirely disregard the opportunities of gifted students in inclusive education, but rather, they say "call". They express their concern, but do not exclude the success of such activities, if placed among favourable solutions and an actual accomplishment of the idea of education for all, which should be reduced to a premise, that one cannot exclude some, to include others.

¹⁶ E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska (ed.), *O dzieciach uzdolnionych matematycznie. Książka dla rodziców i nauczycieli*, Warszawa, Nowa Era 2012.

Research results show, that teachers with less experience are much more optimistic in their opinions on educational opportunities within **integrated education** of gifted students, there are less undecided teachers, however, there are slightly more teachers with a critical attitude. In their opinion, students with disabilities are the group that has the least opportunities in inclusive education. **However, in this case as well, a number of teachers with less experience, who think that inclusive education is beneficial to the aforementioned group, is bigger than the number of more experienced teachers who exhibited similar views.**

The general overview of the research results tells that teachers with less experience tend to be more in favour of inclusive education in regard to all groups of students, than the more experienced teachers. Such results may be explained in various ways.

Teachers with 10 or less years of experienced, were trained in a time, when the necessity of redefining the concept of disability, and of opposing marginalisation and social exclusion, including education, due to any type of functioning abnormalities. The call for the humanisation of life, social support, the individualisation of services, which included full rights, respect, the ability to choose and to control over own life (the humanisation of life); acquiring and maintaining of various skills necessary to lead a self-reliant, independent life, supporting the access to knowledge and culture (social support); opposing adjusting individuals to an established offer (individualisation of services)¹⁷, are arguments for social justice, moral-philosophical premises which result in particular models of reasoning, e. g. inclusive categories.

As according to the analyses and investigations of other authors, the current experience of inclusive action in form of e. g. integrated classes/units, in regard to the accomplishment of inclusive ideas,

¹⁷ J. Renshaw, *Normalisation and Passing*, Canterbury, University of Kent, Personal Social Services Research Unit 1988, J. Renshaw, *Case Management for the Mentally III: Locking at the Evidence Holloway*, "International Journal of Social Psychiatry" 1991, No. 37.

are far from optimistic. There are numerous opinions, that inclusion¹⁸ in the currently applied form, failed. It is often a type of formal integration, a community of a place, rather than of tightened social contacts and emotional bonds¹⁹. Amadeusz Krause claims that administrative proclamation of integration caused the child to be “thrown” into an unprepared area, with all the negative results of such actions²⁰. The same can be said of the teacher’s situation. When the integrated form of education had been sanctioned (1993), none of the institutions of higher education in Poland would educate support teachers. A significant number of teachers from mainstream institutions which opened integrated units, was unqualified and lacked the competence to work with students with disabilities²¹.

¹⁸ Education integration is a form of teaching within the framework of a broadly understood inclusive education.

¹⁹ A. Krause, *Wielość poziomów integracji – konsekwencje dla teorii i praktyki*, w: *Wielowymiarowość integracji w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*, eds. M. Chodkowska, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2003, pp. 59–64.

²⁰ A. Krause, *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls 2010, p. 73.

²¹ i.a.: U. Bartnikowska, M. Wójcik, *Zaniedbania w aspekcie triady: szkoła – rodzice – dziecko w kształceniu integracyjnym i masowym dzieci z wadą słuchu*, [in:] Z. Gajdzica, D. Osik-Chudowolska (eds.), *Wątki zaniedbane, zaniechane, nieobecne w procesie edukacji i wsparcia społecznych osób niepełnosprawnych*, Warszawa, Żak 2004; Z. Gajdzica, *Nauczyciel edukacji wczesnoszkolnej w zreformowanej szkole powszechnej jako organizator procesu kształcenia dziecka upośledzonego umysłowo w stopniu lekkim*, [in:] Z. Palak (ed.), *Pedagogika specjalna w reformowanym ustroju edukacyjnym*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001; K. Bleszyńska, *Determinanty przystosowania ucznia niepełnosprawnego do środowiska szkoły masowej*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; E. Garlej-Drzewiecka, *Pedeutologiczny kontekst myślenia o nauczycielu wiodącym i wspierającym*, [in:] C. Kosakowski, A. Krause, *Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej. Rehabilitacja, opieka i edukacja specjalna w perspektywie zmian*, vol. 3, Olsztyn, Wydawnictwo UWM 2004; T. Oleńska-Pawlak, *Warunki realizacji funkcji opiekuńczej i wychowawczej w szkołach masowych wobec dzieci z zaburzeniami w stanie zdrowia i rozwoju*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; A. Wachowiak, *Błędy nauczycieli szkół masowych w postępowaniu z dziećmi niepełnosprawnymi*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992; H. Łaś, *Wiedza nauczycieli szkół publicz-*

Little has changed since then. Teachers from mainstream institutions, remain to be a group that is less often able to certify the possession of competences required for working with students exhibiting special educational needs, than teachers within the remaining forms of education²². Therefore, one shouldn't wonder at the scepticism of teachers, who experienced, regarding themselves and their students, the negative consequences of implemented changes, and that they are less trusting while approaching subsequent changes, particularly, as there are no details provided.

The second area of analyses is related to the opinions of teachers from integrated preschools, regarding the chances of success of the inclusive actions in regard to the twelve listed groups of students with developmental disorders. The respondents would rate them on a scale from 1 – no chances to 5 – very good chances of success²³.

We should first note, that teachers with less experience would rate only one group as having low chances in inclusive education – children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. The chances of six groups, i.e. children: with severe hearing impairment, severe visual impairment, autism, the Asperger syndrome, multiple disabilities and communication disabilities were rated high, and the chances of five groups were rated as very high. These are: children with mild intellectual disabilities, partial hearing impairment, partial visual impairment, movement disorders, including aphasia, and children with chronic conditions. Teachers with more (24 or more

nych o kształceniu dzieci niepełnosprawnych, [in:] D. Osik, A. Wojnarska (eds.), *Wspomaganie rozwoju uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001.

²² G. Szumski, A. Firkowska-Mankiewicz, *Wokół edukacji włączającej. Efekty kształcenia uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu lekkim w klasach specjalnych, integracyjnych i ogólnodostępnych*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo APS 2010, p. 150.

²³ 1 – no chances of success for inclusive actions, 2 – poor chances of success for inclusive actions, 3 – medium chances of success for inclusive actions, 4 – good chances of success for inclusive actions, 5 – very good chance of success for inclusive actions.

years) experience exhibited less optimism. They rated the chances of four groups as poor. These include: children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, severe visual impairment, autism, and with multiple disabilities. The chances of six subsequent groups were rated as high. These include: children with mild intellectual disabilities, partial hearing impairment, severe hearing impairment, partial visual impairment, with the Asperger syndrome, as well as, children with communication disorders. According to this group of teachers, only two groups have a very high chance of success in inclusive education including: children with movement disorders including aphasia, and with a chronic condition.

The hierarchy of groups with the highest and the least chances of success in inclusive education, varies according to the teachers in regard to their professional experience. The table below presents this hierarchy.

Table 2. The experience of teachers from integrated preschools and the chances within inclusive education, of students with developmental disorders - from highest to lowest

10 and less years of experience	24 and more years of experience
Mild intellectual disability	movement disorders
Movement disorders	chronic condition
Chronic condition	partial hearing impairment
Partial hearing impairment	mild intellectual disability
Partial visual impairment	partial visual impairment
Aspergera syndrome	communication disorders
Communication disorders	severe hearing impairment
Autism	Asperger syndrome
Multiple disabilities	autism
Severe hearing impairment	severe hearing impairment
Severe visual impairment	moderate and severe intellectual disability
Moderate and severe intellectual disability	multiple disabilities

Comparing the study results in the context of statistically significant difference, one should note, that these occur in six cases. Each time, it is the teachers with less experience, who perceive the chances of students as higher.

Table 3. The opinions of integrated preschool education teachers regarding the chances of success for the inclusive action regarding various groups of children/students with disabilities and developmental disorders, and professional experience

	10 and less years of experience (N=110)		24 and more years of experience (N=80)		Student's t-distribution value	The statistic significance of differences
	AM	SD	AM	SD		
Mild intellectual disability	4,51	0,57	3,66	1,14	7,083	0,001
Moderate and severe intellectual disability	2,88	0,99	2,69	0,90	1,357	negligible
Partial hearing impairment	4,07	0,78	3,78	1,0	2,417	0,02
Severe hearing impairment	3,15	1,15	3,24	1,28	-0,529	negligible
Partial visual impairment	4,06	0,74	3,57	0,95	4,083	0,001
Severe visual impairment	3,02	1,15	2,84	0,86	1,200	negligible
Autism	3,33	1,07	2,87	0,95	3,286	0,001
Asperger syndrome	3,8	0,96	3,21	0,98	4,214	0,001
Movement disorders	4,12	0,87	4,12	0,69	0,000	negligible
Multiple disabilities	3,19	1,19	2,67	0,80	3,467	0,001
Communication disorders	3,42	1,23	3,27	1,19	0,882	negligible
Chronic condition	4,08	0,89	4,0	1,02	0,615	negligible

Description: explanations regarding the interpretation of research results: 1-1,99 results - no chances of success in inclusive education regarding a given group of students, 2-2,99 - poor chances, 3-3,99 - good chances, 4-5 - very good chances; AM - Arithmetic Mean; SD - Standard Deviation.

Therefore, the statistically significant differences regarding the opinions of teachers with less or more experience, on the chances of success in inclusive education, are related to cases of children:

- with mild intellectual disabilities – teachers from the first group consider their chances as very good, while teachers from the second group as good,
- with partial hearing impairment – accordingly: very good and good,
- with partial visual impairment – accordingly: very good and good,
- with autism – accordingly – good and poor,
- with the Asperger syndrome – both group consider the chances of this group within inclusive education to be good,
- with multiple disabilities – accordingly: good and poor.

In the remaining cases, the opinions of respondents varied to degrees that cannot be considered statistically significant.

In the context of an attempt to generalise the results, one should examine the internal differentiation of the opinions of studies' respondents. Only on the basis of this data, one will be able to conclude, how the statistically generalised research results compare to the actual feelings of the group, with which they are associated.

The most significant variation of opinion in the group of teachers with 10 and less years of experience, regarding the chances of success of inclusive actions, pertains to children/students: with communication disorders, multiple disabilities, as well as, children with severe visual impairment, and severe hearing impairment. Therefore, it is in regard to these groups of students, that the opinions of teachers, regarding the chances of success of inclusive activities, vary the most.

The range of average results for 110 teachers with 10 or less years of experience, taking part in the study, indicates that, the variation of opinions is very significant in regard to 4 groups of children, including children:

- with *communication disorders* – the range of average results is: 4,65; 2,19;
- with *multiple disabilities* – the range of average results is: 4,38; 2,0;

- with *severe visual impairment* – the range of average results is: 4,17; 1,87;
- with *severe hearing impairment*: 4,3; 2,0.

The above means that within the studied group, a number of teachers think that these children have very good chances of success in inclusive education, however, there are also teachers who think that these chances are poor.

Simultaneously, teachers with 10 and less years of experience are more consensual regarding their opinions on students with:

- *mild intellectual disabilities* – the range of average results: 5; 3,94;
- *partial visual impairment*: 4,8; 3,32;
- *partial hearing impairment*: 4,85; 3,29.

Therefore, one may assume, that the respondents rate the chances of success of educational activities within the framework of inclusive education of the aforementioned groups of students, as very good and good.

Analogous analyses regarding the second group of teachers, with 24 and more years of experience, allow to state, that the most significant variation of opinions regarding the chances of success of inclusive actions, occurs in reference to children/students:

- with *severe hearing impairment* – the range of average results is: 4,52; 1,96;
- with *communication disorders* – 4,46; 2,08;
- with *mild intellectual disabilities* – 4,8; 2,52.

That means, the opinions of teachers resonate between the category of very good and poor chances of success of inclusive action in regard to these groups of students.

The integrated preschool education teachers with 24 and more years of experience agree the most in regard to the chances within inclusive education of children/students:

- with *movement disorders* – the range of average results (4,81; 3,43),
- with *multiple disabilities* – the range of average results (3,47; 1,87) and
- with *severe visual impairment* – the range of average results (3,7; 1,98).

The above means, that the chances of children with movement disorders to achieve success in inclusive education are rated as very good and good, and in the cases of multiple disabilities and severe visual impairment, as good and less than poor (the lower values of the ranges of average results, are located in the interpretative category of results indicating no or very slight chances, considering, that these results are close to the higher values of the range of results in this category).

Summary

The varied opinions, as presented by the research results, of integrated preschool education teachers, considering their professional experience, and regarding the chances within the inclusive education of students, the participants of the process of education, encourage certain conclusions, or even postulates.

The positive attitude of teachers with less experience, towards inclusive education, is a welcome factor. I wish to believe, that it is an effect of promoting the tendency, the change in understanding education, and of the belief that common, good quality education beneficial for all students is possible, as well as, social integration as its result.

The fact, that there is still a significant number of teachers unconvinced regarding the results of introducing this potential, new model of education of students with special educational needs (depending on the group of students, the numbers vary between few and over a dozen percent). Opponents of inclusive education constitute a group that is more significant in numbers than the undecided (between 10% or more to approximately 20%). The above gives an indication, that professional experience may only partially provide grounds for the varying study results.

The necessary condition for the success of inclusive education is learning via experience. Voices of critique, a significantly increased scepticism in opinions of teachers that have more experience, can-

not be disregarded. Contrary, only their detailed analysis, particularly in reference to the dangerous areas, barriers, which became the basis for being undecided, as well as, for the unequivocally critical evaluation of inclusive education as a solution for teaching all student groups, may help design actions, so that previous mistakes would be avoided.

Education of future, and training of current teachers, that would prepare them to work with students within the framework of inclusive education, and equip them with competences regarding working with diverse groups. It should particularly apply to teachers of not only early (preschool and early school) education, but also teachers of particular subjects, as the process initiated at preschool or elementary school level, must be continued.

Additionally, it seems that both groups of teachers need support in accomplishing their professional tasks, which must be synchronised with a systemic support of every student, depending on the needs, as then, possibly, the gaps of indicators of presumed chances of success of inclusive education of particular groups of students, as well as, the variation of opinions of teachers in regard to their professional experience, would decrease.

Bibliography

- Ainscow M., Booth T., Dyson A. i in., *Improving Schools: Developing Inclusion*, London, Routledge 2006.
- Bartnikowska U., Wójcik M., *Zaniedbania w aspekcie triady: szkoła – rodzice – dziecko w kształceniu integracyjnym i masowym dzieci z wadą słuchu*, [in:] Z. Gajdzica, D. Osik-Chudowolska (eds.), *Wątki zaniedbane, zaniechane, nieobecne w procesie edukacji i wsparcia społecznego osób niepełnosprawnych*, Warszawa, Żak 2004.
- Błęzyńska K., *Determinanty przystosowania ucznia niepełnosprawnego do środowiska szkoły masowej*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, United Nations, 2006 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disabilities-convention.htm>.
- Cooper P., Jacobs B., *From inclusion to engagement: Helping Students Engage with Schooling through Policy and Practice*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2011, p. 9.

- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Teacher Education for Inclusion in Europe – Challenges and Opportunities*, Odense, Dania: EAREU with SPE 2011, p. 76.
- Gajdzica Z., *Nauczyciel edukacji wczesnoszkolnej w zreformowanej szkole powszechnej jako organizator procesu kształcenia dziecka upośledzonego umysłowo w stopniu lekkim*, [in:] Z. Palak (eds.), *Pedagogika specjalna w reformowanym ustroju edukacyjnym*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001.
- Gallagher T. L., Bennett S., *A Canadian Perspective on the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities in High Schools*, [in:] *Inclusive Education for Students With Intellectual Disabilities*, R. G. Craven, A. J. S. Morin, D. Tracey, P. D. Parker, H. F. Zhong (eds.), North Carolina IAP – Information Age Publishing 2015, p. 26.
- Garlej-Drzewiecka E., *Pedeutologiczny kontekst myślenia o nauczycielu wiodącym i wspierającym*, [in:] C. Kosakowski, A. Krause, *Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej. Rehabilitacja, opieka i edukacja specjalna w perspektywie zmian*, vol. 3, Olsztyn, Wydawnictwo UWM 2004.
- Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska E. (eds.), *O dzieciach uzdolnionych matematycznie. Książka dla rodziców i nauczycieli*, Warszawa, Nowa Era 2012.
- Krause A., *Wielość poziomów integracji – konsekwencje dla teorii i praktyki*, [w:] *Wielowymiarowość integracji w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*, eds. M. Chodkowska, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2003, pp. 59–64.
- Krause A., *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*, Kraków, Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls 2010, p. 73.
- Limont W., *Uczeń zdolny. Jak go rozpoznać i jak z nim pracować*, Gdańsk, GWP 2010.
- Łaś H., *Wiedza nauczycieli szkół publicznych o kształceniu dzieci niepełnosprawnych*, in: D. Osik, A. Wojnarska (eds.), *Wspomaganie rozwoju uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS 2001.
- Norwich B., *A response to 'Special Educational Needs: A New Look'*, [in:] Terzi L. (ed.) *Special Educational Needs: A New Look*, London, Continuum 2010.
- Oleńska-Pawlak T., *Warunki realizacji funkcji opiekuńczej i wychowawczej w szkołach masowych wobec dzieci z zaburzeniami w stanie zdrowia i rozwoju*, [w:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992.
- Renshaw J., *Normalisation and Passing*, Canterbury: University of Kent, Personal Social Services Research Unit 1988, J. Renshaw, *Case Management for the Mentally III: Looking at the Evidence Holloway*, "International Journal of Social Psychiatry" 1991, No. 37.
- Ordinance of the Ministry of National Education for 10 March 2017 regarding the principles of psychological-pedagogical assistance in public preschools, schools and institutions, *Journal of Laws* 25 August 2017, pos. 1519.
- Szumski G., Firkowska-Mankiewicz A., *Wokół edukacji włączającej. Efekty kształcenia uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu lekkim w klasach specjalnych, integracyjnych i ogólnodostępnych*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo APS 2010, p. 150.

The economic activity of the Polish population, 1st quarter 2016, Warszawa, GUS 2017.

Wachowiak A., *Błędy nauczycieli szkół masowych w postępowaniu z dziećmi niepełnosprawnymi*, [in:] A. Hulek, B. Grochmal-Bach (eds.), *Uczeń niepełnosprawny w szkole masowej*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WSP 1992.

Walton E., *Dismantling the Empire of Educational Exclusion*, [in:] E. Walton, S. Moonsamy (eds.), *Making Education Inclusive*, Cambridge, Scholars Publishing 2015, p. 13.