



# **Journal of Exceptional People**

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**Institute of Special Education Studies**  
Faculty of Education – Palacký University Olomouc

## **Journal of Exceptional People**

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## **Journal of Exceptional People**

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# Introduction

Dear Readers,

The next issue of the Journal of Exceptional People will have some minor changes that respond to the requirements of modern electronic and printed periodicals. In particular, we reduce the number of articles and focused more on quality. At the same time we also increased our earlier contribution restrictive range from 10 to 20 pages. We also publish contributions from countries from which it is relatively difficult to obtain any information. Our editorial board in this issue managed to get three valuable contributions from Nigeria. Two of them relate to inclusive education in this country (Ewa James Abua, Olay James Eburikure), the other deals with the situation of hearing impaired students in secondary schools in Nigeria (Igoni Joy Sade).

In this edition of our magazine you will also find a very valuable article about gifted students, which deals with the evaluation of their integration in primary schools by Slovak author Miroslava Adamík Šimegová. Other three Slovak authors Jana Lopúchová, Veronika Šušorová and Martin Zani pay attention to stimulus programs and their use in the early care for children with visual impairments.

Pavel Kucera sent to our editors an interesting article that relates to the typical presentation of hearing impaired people in the film. In his paper he assesses the cinematic image of a hearing impairment and compares it with the existing reality.

The article Poetoterapeutic intervention in people with post-operative cardio care I dared to write myself. It concerns the use of a less well-known formative expressive therapy for clients after myocardial infarction.

As usual the magazine is finished by a short review of a selected publication. Catherine Lacková recommended to read the title Ten things every child with autism wishes you knew by Ellen Notbohm.

Contributions are classified into three categories. There are scientific papers, overview essays and reviews. In the header of each contribution it is indicated whether those contributions were reviewed.

Our editorial board wishes you a pleasant reading

Pavel Svoboda

# Overcoming the challenges of inclusive education in Nigeria: A focus on south-south geopolitical zone

(scientific paper)

Olayi James Eburikure

**Abstract:** *Inclusive education was the outcome of the Salamanca statement in 2008. Its focus was on addressing the failures and challenges of general and special education, especially the subject matter of integration and mainstreaming. The implementation of inclusive education was expected to act as a magic wand in addressing the deficiencies, challenges and hiccups in both general and special education. Inclusive education in Nigeria is confronted with multifarious and multifaceted difficulties and challenges which if left unaddressed will defeat the desired expected objective. This paper therefore undertook a survey of the very crucial challenges confronting the full, effective and functional implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria focusing on the South-South geopolitical zone with a view to addressing the inadequacies. To illicit responses, questionnaires were designed and administered on respondents from three states of Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Rivers. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the data and the results discussed. From the findings, suggestions/appropriate recommendations were proffered toward enhancing efficient and effective implementation of the policy to benefit learners in Nigeria schools thus, improving on the overall set standard of education.*

**Key-words:** *Inclusive education, special education, integration, mainstreaming, Nigeria schools, standard of education*

## 1 Introduction

Creating an inclusive society is the main objective of inclusive education. Special needs education incorporates an eclectic array of pedagogies from which all learners may benefit. It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning

must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to pre-ordained methodologies regarding the pace and nature of the learning process.

A child-centred pedagogy is beneficial to all learners. It is evident that it can substantially reduce the drop out syndrome which is characteristic of the present education systems while ensuring higher levels of achievements. A child-centred pedagogy can as well help to avoid the waste of resources and shattering of hopes that all too frequently a consequence of poor quality instruction and one fitted all mentality towards education (The Salamanca statement 1994).

Inclusive education paved way for a training ground for people oriented society that respects both differences and the dignity of all human beings. Thus, the right of every child to education is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was reaffirmed by the world declaration on Education for all (EFA). Every person with a disability has a right to self-expression with regards to education, as far as this can be obtained.

It should be noted that prior to the Salamanca Framework for Action, various forms of providing educational services for special needs persons were advocated around the world. This was with the aim of making education accessible and life in general convenient to persons with special needs. These pedagogies included the practice of integration in Britain, mainstreaming in the United State and normalization in the Scandinavia and Canada (Amadi in Ewa 2000).

It can therefore be deduced that inclusion as proclaimed by the Salamanca framework is an expansion as well as a merger of the already existing services to serve persons with special needs around the world.

This paper therefore undertook a survey of the very crucial challenges confronting the full, effective and functional implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria, focusing on the South – South geopolitical zone with a view to addressing the inadequacies.

## **2 Literature Review**

The fundamental principle of inclusion is that all handicapped should learn together wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have as contained in the Salamanca framework for Action (1994).

By implication therefore, an inclusive school should provide a conducive atmosphere for learning to all children, disabilities notwithstanding that is, teaching/learning activities, including teachers, learning aids/materials and equipment, architectural designs and above all environmentally friendly atmosphere to special needs persons.



One important tool for an effective inclusive education program is that in the inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive whatever extra support they may require to attain a functional education.

Mutale (2008) opined that children who learn together learn to live together. According to her, inclusive education serves as both a social and educational tool for integration. She noted that universal education suggests that all children irrespective of their gender, creed, economic status learning difficulties, disability etc. have equal access to learning through the regular school system. Furthermore, she explained “all children need an education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the mainstreamed society”.

Inclusion of all children into the educational system is a human right. Hence inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educating a child with all disability to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child rather than moving the child to the services (Olayi 2008).

Inclusive education according to Kanu in Obi (2008) is the provision of educational services for children with special needs in regular schools and classrooms attended by non-disabled children. Those schools and classrooms are directly supervised by general education teachers with appropriate special education support and assistance.

According to the six goals of the Dakar Framework (1990) for action, education for the most vulnerable children should be an integral part of the overall school system. Avoke (2005) stated that education for all calls for forceful capacity building to improve quality and increase access to education through building on inclusive education approaches. Inclusive programs need to harness all the services to ensure that children make consistent social, emotional and academic gains. Inclusive education is ideal for achievement of the EFA goals and MDG Vision 2020 that seeks to make education accessible to all Nigerian children by the year 2020.

### **3 Why inclusive education in the south-south geopolitical zone and Nigeria as a whole?**

Inclusive education is seen as a human and child right issue, where individuals are not to be discriminated on religion, race and ethnicity, condition of birth or disability. The Dakar world Education Forum recognized the rights of all children, abled, disabled, at-risk and the vulnerable to have access to the qualitative education by 2015 through:

1. Expansion of educational opportunities for boys and girls, especially the disabled, vulnerable and disadvantaged.

2. Promotion of innovative programs that encourage those with special needs and disabilities to help them enroll, attend and successfully complete their programs in inclusive settings.
3. Ensuring accessibility in inclusive settings for children with special learning needs and for children with various forms of disabilities (Unicef, 2004).

Obi (2008) identified the benefits of inclusive education to include:

- It promote better academic achievement for the disabled. Non-disabled children could become peer teachers by assisting the disabled in topics and areas that they find difficult. Children with difficulties in benefiting from traditional academic programs could learn faster by observing others.
- Inclusive education develops a better working relationship, communication skills, social interaction skills and friendship between children with and without disabilities. These children without disabilities could begin to appreciate those with disability by understanding that disability is not contagious nor is it a disease and that disabled children are people with whom they can live together.
- It reduces stigma and enhances disabled children self – esteem. Stigmatization brings discrimination and labeling. Hence inclusion will remove the vices.
- Inclusion gingers healthy competition among children, disabled children who are remained unidentified and as such its drop out for problems that could easily have been solved in an inclusive setting.
- It also leads to collaborative approach between professionals in general education, special education, social workers, counselors, psychologists etc. for the good of the children (Unicef 2004).

#### **4 Challenges of inclusive education**

1. Among the hindrance to educating disabled children is discrimination, segregation and labeling. Many parents of disabled children are ashamed to bring out their children from hiding (homes) and send them to labeled schools. This is because once a child is said to be attending a special school for the deaf, blind, mentally retarded, physically disabled, it will immediately be concluded that the child is disabled. This impacts negatively on the morale and performance of children with disabilities who will definitely develop poor self concept and inferiority complex that may lead to frustration.
2. Societal attitude: Ewa (2000) put it that generally speaking the societal attitude towards the inclusion of the special needs children has been negative. This is characterized by discrimination, segregation, labeling and non acceptance of the special needs into the mainstream of the regular school environment. To many

the best and ideal place of learning for the special needs persons is special schools/centres.

3. One other challenging factor to the issue of inclusive education is that the Nigeria Policy on Education does not have a legislating backings and so leaving a wide gap for litigation in the case of failure by the implementators of the policies. For instance the Universal Primary Education introduced in 1976 gave only a de-facto legal status to the integration and education of children with special needs in Nigeria. Similarly the National Policy on Education (1981) although devoted section 8 of the policy to special education with clearly stated objectives, lack legislative backing and so cannot be challenged by any one in the case of failure.
4. Personnel: The dearth of trained personnel in the areas of audiology, orientation and mobility, sign language interpreters, braillists, speech therapists and lot more posts a lot of threat to inclusive education. In most cases the available ones tend to quit the job for greener pasture due to poor remuneration and lack of incentives. Evidence abounds across the states in the zone that even special schools for over the years lost special teachers to other better paid jobs thereby leaving the fate of our special children in the hands of ill trained and ill equipped non specialist teachers who are either deployed on secondment to help the situation or engaged on part time arrangement.
5. Funding: Olayi (2008) indicated that inclusive education is capital intensive as more funds may be required to carry out restructuring/redesigning the environment to suit the special needs children. It may also placed financial burdens on the schools, parents and government as it may involve employing supplemental aids and services, equipment and technological appliances. As a result, some parents of children with more severe disabilities may become apprehensive about the opportunities their children may have to develop basic life skills in the regular schools.
6. Training: The absence of update of knowledge on new skills and assistive technologies especially for children with visual impairment remains a serious challenge for teachers, students as well as managerial effectiveness and expertise. The need for continuous in service training and on the job update of knowledge and skills in line with new innovations in the teaching/learning, instruction/instructional programming cannot be overemphasized. Hence this remain the only tool for overcoming the fast degrading and deplorable state of our educational system vis a vis the implementation of the inclusive education policy.
7. Over population: One other gruesome challenge besieging effective implementation of inclusive education is overpopulation in the classrooms in the Nigerian schools. In a situation where a teacher has much to do in tackling the large number of students in the regular school, what then becomes the fate of the teachers as well as students when the special needs students are brought into the regular

school system? This does not give room for individualized attention as enshrined in the Salamanca statement framework for action (1994).

In the same vein (Okwudire and Unogwu 2011) summarized the challenges of inclusive education in Nigeria as follows:

- Administrative rigidity, inflexibility of location and distribution of educational resources.
- Inadequate funding
- Social attitude
- Government lukewarm attitude towards education of the special needs person.
- Manpower development
- Inadequate content in the curriculum

### **Statement of the problem**

Inclusive education in Nigeria is confronted with multifarious and multifaceted difficulties and challenges which if left unaddressed will defeat the desired expected objective of inclusion. This study was prompted by the desire to address these challenges.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study focused on identifying and determining the various strategies to be put in place in order to overcome the challenges affecting the smooth implementation of inclusive education in the south-south geopolitical region of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent has the state government in the south-south geopolitical zone enhanced inclusive education for persons with disabilities.
2. Are there likely problems confronting the smooth implementation of inclusion of persons with special needs into regular schools across the zone?
3. To what extent does lack of facilities affect the smooth implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H0<sub>1</sub> Governments across the states in the south-south zone do not fully understand the concept of inclusion and have not made adequate provision for the implementation of the policy.
- H0<sub>2</sub> There are inadequate facilities on ground for the smooth implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

H0<sub>3</sub> Poor funding and supervision by governments across the zone has significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education.

H0<sub>4</sub> Poor knowledge and lack of awareness about the policy by individuals and disabled people organizations (DPO) across the zone has no significant effect on the smooth implementation of inclusive education.

### **Methodology**

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This is because it allows the researchers to make inference and generalization of the population by selecting and studying the sample for the study. The population of the study consists of government officers from Ministry of Education (MOE), teachers/school heads and disabled persons. A total of 360 respondents were randomly selected for the study. The selection was done through a multi-stage random sampling involving the stratified and sample random sampling techniques. The stratification was based on the three units stated above (MOE, teachers/school heads and disabled person). In each of the stratum, a simple random sampling was employed to select 60 government officials from MOE, 240 teachers/school heads and 60 disabled persons making a total sample of 360.

Four points likert-type questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by Experts in Measurement and Evaluation/Statistic of the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The test-retest reliability method was employed to ascertain the reliability estimate of the instrument. The reliability index was found to be 0.81. At the end of the exercise, 360 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved with the aid of some research assistance.

## **5 Hypothesis-by-hypothesis presentation of result**

### **Hypothesis one**

Government across the states in the south-south zone do not fully understand the concept of inclusion and have not made adequate provision for the implementation of the policy.

The independent variable involved in this hypothesis is government understanding of the concept of inclusion, while the dependent variable is implementation of the policy. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was deployed to test the hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Pearson Produce Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship government understanding of the concept of inclusion and implementation of the policy (N = 360).

Variables	$\Sigma y$ $\Sigma y$		$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Concept of inclusion	17.31	6232	9347	61031	-0.44
Implementation of inclusive education	16.48	5933	7838		

\*significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .113$ ,  $df = 358$

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of -0.44 is higher than the critical r-value of .113 at .05 level of significance with 358 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that government fully understands the concept of inclusive education. The negative value attached to the calculated value indicates that the implementation of inclusive education is significantly low or not at all.

### Hypothesis two

There are no significant adequate facilities on ground for the smooth implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

The independent variable is adequate facilities, while the dependent variable is implementation of inclusive education. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between inadequate facilities and smooth implementation of inclusive education (N = 360).

Variables	$\Sigma y$ $\Sigma y$		$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Inadequate facilities	6.89	6080	8957	136492	-0.40*
Implementation of inclusive education	16.48	5933	7838		

\*significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .113$ ,  $df = 358$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.40 is higher than the critical r-value of .113 at .05 level of significance with 358 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that inadequate facilities

on ground significantly affect the smooth implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

### Hypothesis three

Poor funding/supervision by the government across the zone has no significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education. The independent involve is poor funding/supervision; while the dependent variable is implementation of inclusive education. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between poor funding/supervision by the government and implementation of inclusive education (N = 360).

Variables	$\Sigma y$ $\Sigma y$		$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Poor funding/supervision	17.25	6210	9286	167332	0.69*
Implementation of inclusion	16.48	5933	7838		

\*significant at .05 level, critical r = .113, df = 358

The result in Table 3 indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.69 is higher than the critical r-value of .113 at .05 level of significance with 358 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that poor funding/supervision by the government has a significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

### Hypothesis four

Poor knowledge/awareness about the policy by individuals and disabled people organization (DPO) across the zone has no significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education in the zone.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is poor knowledge/awareness; while the dependent variable is implementation of inclusive education. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between poor knowledge/awareness and implementation of inclusive education (N = 360).

Variables	$\Sigma y$ $\Sigma y$		$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Poor knowledge/ awareness	17.01	6124	9279	158421	0.62
Implementation of inclusion	16.48	5933	7838		

\*significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .113$ ,  $df = 358$

The result in Table 4 indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.62 is higher than the critical r-value of .113 at .05 level of significance with 358 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that poor knowledge/awareness of the policy by individuals and disabled people organization (DPO) has a significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education across the zone.

## 6 Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that governments fully understand the concept of inclusive education but the implementation of the policy is low and ineffective. The finding corroborates with the views of Ewa (2000) that the societal attitude towards the disabled persons is negative. This equally extends to planning programs that will be beneficial to them.

The result of the second hypothesis indicated that inadequate facilities on ground affect the effective implementation of inclusive education in the zone. The findings are in agreement with the view of Olayi (2008) who opined that inclusive education is capital intensive, hence adequate funds is not made available to put the necessary facilities on ground for the smooth take off of inclusive education in the zone.

The result of the third hypothesis showed that poor funding/supervision by the government has a significant effect on the implementation of inclusive education. The finding is in line with the view of Okwudire and Unogwu (2011) who opined that inclusive education is faced with the problem of inadequate funding which tends to affect the smooth implementation of the policy.

The result of the last hypothesis indicated that poor knowledge/awareness of the policy by individuals and the disabled people organization significantly affects the implementation of inclusive education in the zone. The finding is in consonance with the view of Obi (2008) that poor knowledge about the abolition of persons with disabilities leads to discrimination and segregation thereby affecting their self concept.



## 7 Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the principle of inclusion is based on the fact that all categories of children, disability notwithstanding should learn together wherever possible regardless of any difficulties or differences. In view of the above fact, it can be said that the practice of inclusive education in the South – South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is yet to take a stand. This is due to the miss-feelings still exhibited by the state governments concern.

The paper therefore concluded that the practice of inclusion in the south-south geopolitical zone is still in theory and not in practice. It therefore calls on the government and other stakeholders in education across the zone to brace up to the challenges.

## 8 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to help overcome the challenges of inclusive education in the south-south geopolitical zone:

1. The National Assembly should enact a legislation to back up all educational policies especially Education policies on education of the handicapped so as to give room for accountability on the part of government and other stakeholders in education.
2. For proper inclusion into the regular school system, adequate preparation in terms of restructuring architectural designs to suit persons with disabilities, procurement of special learning aids/facilities should be provided to all schools.
3. More personnel especially the special educators should be trained. Moreover the incentives as spelt out in the blue print on education of the handicapped in Nigeria should be paid to the teachers/personnel working directly with the special needs children in the inclusive schools.
4. Bursary awards should be made available to all special needs persons in school so as to motivate them to learn and be properly integrated in the school.
5. Emphasis should be placed on training teachers, special educators and other supportive staff as well as procurement of special equipment and materials in order to give equal access to education and to bridge the gap between children with handicapping conditions and their non handicapped peers with regards to learning. Above all governments across the zone should ensure that as enshrined in the Blue Print on the education of the Handicapped in Nigeria, a census aimed at identifying children with special needs be carried out because this will go a long way in helping the various ministries of education across the zone to identify schools where inclusion can be carried out.

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(reviewed twice)

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# Stimulation programs as a part of the intervention approaches in the early care for children with visual impairments

(scientific paper)

Jana Lopúchová, Veronika Šušorová, Martin Záni

**Abstract:** *THIS article presents an options and a usage of early intervention approaches to children with visual impairment through stimulation programs. It particularly deals with the possibility of intervention by the Oregon project, the INSITE program, the Hätscher-Rosenbauer program of visual support, the program of basal stimulation. The contribution emphasizes the importance of intervention activities in the natural environment of child. It presents the research findings of the verification program through intensive stimulation based on the basal stimulation of children with visual impairment.*

**Keywords:** *stimulation activities, intervention, visual impairment, Oregon project, INSITE model.*

**This contribution presents partial results of the project KEGA no. 118UK-4/2011 Education of disabled and disadvantaged children of age 0–6 – element of the new system of special education. The study focuses on presentation of the results of research carried out within the KEGA no. 118UK-4/2011 project.**

## 1 Introduction

Integral part of Early Intervention process is stimulation of development of children of age 0–3, including stimulation of visual function. According to Vítková (in Opatřilová, Nováková et al., 2012) if you miss the first three years of life, and you did not provide necessary support in child's development, it is difficult and often impossible to remedy this situation later. These chances, consisting of alleviating and eliminating the beginning disability, and affect on developing children's brains. Speck (1987, s. 350) based on the knowledge that the brain of a young child is able

of regeneration and compensation for damage incurred in a much greater extent and that this development is heavily dependent on the timeliness of interventions, stimulation and educative activities.

Nowadays we have a lot of options to stimulate the development of children in early childhood. For example many developmental, respectively stimulating programs proven by research activities are fully used in special education processes.

Several developmental, pacing, or diagnostic and incentive programs are elaborated and used in special educational theory, but mainly in practice. In this contribution we mention the most frequent programs and the ones, which are in the sense of holistic approach applicable at work with visually impaired or multiple disabled child.

The programs used by children with visual impairments can be classified in terms of their applicability to developmental and stimulation programs.

Among the most frequent **developmental programs** for visually impaired are INSITE model, Oregon project, Conversations with parents of blind children by Josef Smýkal, Education of child in the family by Jaroslav Koch, Exercises for early childhood by Strassmeierová, Grow child by Eva Kiedroňová, Overview of child development by Allen-Marotz, Developmental range by Reynell-Zinkin, The range of social maturity for blind children pre-school age by Maxfield-Bucholz, I.C.A.N. – Functional test for deaf blind, PAVII project, Reach out and Teach and other.

The **stimulation programs** are for example: Visual program development by Natalie Barraga, Look at me, Visual perception by Frostig, Visual exercises by Hätscher-Rosenbauer, Kijkdoos and other.

## 2 Visual and stimulation programs

### ❖ Conversations with parents on the education of blind children in the family (Josef Smýkal)

Smýkal wrote an excellent book, which emphasizes the importance of family for raising children with visual impairments. The book contains a lot of information and ideas, how blind child explore the world, importance of move, development orientation in space, the role of the senses in personal development, the development of active search, the importance of toys and games, language development, shaping the child's personality. Smýkal focused on space (creating ideas of his own body), highlights the role of the senses in personal development as well as other sites of education (social education, music, art, etc.).

### ❖ Education of child in the family (Jaroslav Koch)

The book written by Jaroslav Koch describes the development of intact children. However, this work can be used for feedback to promote a child development with

visual or multiple disabilities. It discusses not only on the influence of heredity, but also the developmental capabilities of the child early age, meaning the experience gained in the process of early learning and child status (as important conditions for success of education). The book also offers suggestions, how to induce a child in response to any stimulus. It also includes the ideas for the development of motor skills as one of the components of the gross motor development of the child. Koch emphasizes the importance of the senses and their support in the first few months the child's life (and of course later, too). We consider that the book can serve as an excellent thematic material for many of activities not only for intact children, but also for children with visual impairments. The visually and multiply handicapped children have the same sequence of development, but the timing of the onset of a period of learning and different competencies may differ from the norm.

#### ❖ **Oregon project for children with visual impairment at preschool age**

Oregon project was originally designed for children at preschool age with visual impairments, without other associated disability. Some parts of the program can be used also to children with multiple disabilities. Oregon project is built on the premise that children with visual impairments can learn, grow and develop like intact children (children without visual impairment). It also assumes that the developmental process may take longer. If the child is blind, it may require changes and modifications in educational environments. Although many procedures that are successful with regular children, may also be appropriate for visually impaired children. The program is designed to investigate the current developmental level of the child and provides a framework "curriculum" for professionals who work with children. Manual is processed by child development in different areas and can serve as a basis for drawing individual educational program. For the effectiveness of the program is essential to work together with parents and other specialists who care for a child. Oregon project includes 640 exercises in eight areas, which are interconnected. Each area is divided into developmental periods, to the approximate age categories – birth, 1.–2. year, 2.–3. year, 3.–4. year, 4.–5. year, 5.–6. year. Program includes all the skills necessary to 6 years. It is not expected that all skills are equally important, but each is so important, that we have to pay attention to all of them. The basic areas of program Oregon are THINKING (COGNITIVE FIELD), SPEECH, SOCIALIZATION, VISION, COMPENSATION SKILLS, SELF-SERVICE, MOTOR SKILLS.

#### ❖ **INSITE model**

Model of home intervention for children with multiple handicap and sensory impairments in age of infants, toddlers and preschoolers

The program contains information for counselors. INSITE model includes communication program, auditory program, visual program, cognitive program, development program and motor developmental program, such as motor skills, self-service skills and social-emotional development.

Multiple disabilities are one of the least explored and the most traumatic disability. Individuals with multiple disabilities have problems in several areas. In practice, in our opinion they miss a holistic approach to clients and transdisciplinary collaboration of experts. Subsequently, pressure on the family is very intense and stressful. Parents need time to adapt after the birth of a disabled child. Therefore, parents need guidance and support, which is the aim of the INSITE program.

The model meets these requirements by Makovičová (1998):

1. *The need of early intervention at home.*
2. *The need for intervention focused on family*
3. *The need of services that cover all aspects of child development – model includes diagnostics and home programs*
4. *The needs of the child transition from home program to school program*
5. *Economically effective early intervention.*

**The main components of the model** consist of three basic parts:

- **administration** (identification, diagnostic of child, diagnostic of family, leading of program – design a service model, training of personnel, cooperation between different organizations, transition from home services to services in educational facility);
- **direct services** (arrange regular assessment status and needs of the child and family, collaboration with other professionals and parents as a team to achieve goals; facilitation of ongoing support to the family);
- **support services** – audiological, ophthalmological, therapeutic, psychological, developmental, speech therapy services and so forth.

#### ❖ **PAVII Project – Parents and young visually impaired child**

The program is elaborated for the age group of children from birth to 3 years. The basic requirements are:

1. Parent's ability to observe and interpret the child's behavior.
2. The child learns about a material and social environment through interaction with adults.
3. The primary factor acting on a child less than 3 years old is a parent.
4. Initial experience with the world based on "teaching loops" and "supporting strategies".

5. For early care advisory is in all respects the most suitable home environment of the child.
6. Cognitive, communication and social gaps in child development are associated with visual impairment in infancy and may have adverse consequences for subsequent development.

The basic material reflects two **basic goals**:

- a) supporting and anchoring the role of parents as the primary providers of early care
- b) developing techniques, suitable for the environment and in chronological order by age appropriateness.

1. *Parental assessment of needs infants and toddlers* is a set of tests, which helps parents identify goals and priorities (move, interaction with objects and people, daily routine, family life, in the wider community, communication). There are questions about activities that parents prefer. How to understand disability of the child. The way distinguishes and identifies priorities of early childhood care.
2. *Normal family life* – video and their structure. The point is that parents observe themselves and child with normal daily activities. Curriculum consists of written instructions to record and review records, questionnaire and objective scoring scale.
3. *Input information on functional tests* (Initial test of functional vision, Initial test of functional hearing, Communication test, Test of interaction with objects, Test of development)
4. *Visits of families* (a guide for counselors, exercises and practical suggestions, solutions of problems).
5. *Preparing for pre-primary education* – for visually impaired preschoolers, their parents and the professionals. Instructions in selecting the most appropriate educational program.
6. *We are learning together* – Instructions to social coexistence.

❖ **Program of visual stimulation by Matthias Zeschitz and Marianna Strothmann**

The program consists of a series of 159 slides, of which 104 are black and white and the rest are colored. The program has some images of different subjects, which may – or may not – be familiar to children, scheme of human faces, hands, eyes and mouth and finally “hidden objects”.

It contains much more simple designs as well as their combination and continued to progressively more complex objects. Most black-and-white slides are available in the form of positive and negative, and should be showed as a couple. The cur-

rent range of series allows systematic variation, as well as updates to offer incentives for improving children's ability of perceptions.

**Simple slides** – provides some easily organizing information to vision context. Even relatively simple visual information, such as banding – dark stripe – light stripe, brain must recognize as an organized pattern. Formal properties are mediated by different neural areas of the optic center.

**Comprehensive slides** – are the broader patterns of information for visual cortex, for example differently wide stripes of different colors in different directions, without a recognizable “good form” or pattern, therefore irregular. This activates a large number of neutral areas. When the brain is not able to absorb the number of information, that leads to the rejection of information, a child's lost of interest.

**Color slides** – in previous series there were few color images, color images have too little contrast resolution of brightness. Color perception is much more than just an analysis of wavelengths. A child with a high degree of visual impairment may be fascinated by color. Therefore, color plays an important role in the stimulation. For most of the slides are the colors chosen so, that the light between the two bordering color has different tones.

**“Good Pictures”** – series includes a number of images that are regular and symmetric. They have varying degrees of difficulty.

**Special motives** – These images are focusing on active attention. Incompletely shown images provoke the curiosity of a child.

The program was redesigned to our conditions in Slovakia (2009) by Lopúchová and Poláková. All principles of this program, including shapes, colors and contrast are maintained, but slides due to the fact that they need outdated technical support, were transformed to present possibilities of ICT. All slides were transmitted into computer using Power Point and then projector, to keep showing patterns on the wall.

❖ **Development of visual perception for children 3–5 years (How mole Barbora saw the world, 1. part)**

❖ **Development of visual perception for children 4–6 years (How mole Barbora found its way to home, 2. part)**

Jiřina Bednářová, creator of program (2005) offers activities which are aimed at developing visual perception. Exercises focused on visual differentiation, differentiation of figure and background, exploring color, visual analysis and synthesis, surface spatial perception, visual memory, coordination eye-hand or eye-foot or eye-body, concentration and attention.



### ❖ Hätscher-Rosenbauer visual exercises

One of the other, and I would argue that the innovative possibilities of developing visual perception is an exercise to color tables. Color tables compiled by Wolfgang Hätscher-Rosenbauer in the early 90s of last century (1983–1984). He combined therapy system by Theo Gimbel, which used mainly light irradiation with the system by Rudolf Steiner so-called eye-strengthening-chart. By looking at the color-sensitive image, placed on a contrasting background, it prompts the eye to create the follow-contrast images, the so-called afterimages (Rosenbauer, 1999). Rosenbauer used apperception to support visual of eyes. Apperception includes visual impressions of light and dark contrasts, colors, forms, movements and figures in the field of view. Process of apperception creates an order in visible world by immediately matching what we see with all experiences already gained through our senses and it also integrates it into existing, created by ourselves and more or less firm image of world. Perception is a function and apperception is the process.

**Table 1:** The effects of chromatic (color) tables to improve vision. From Rosenbauer, 1999.

	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Apperception</b>
<b>Visual acuity</b>	Pointing recording in centre of perception, selection of points and signs	Attention concentrated on one point
<b>Peripheral vision</b> <b>The entire scope of eye view</b>	Long bounded sight on whole visual field, long focus, recording everything	Open view in all directions, released integrating attention
<b>Perception of color</b>	Perception of signal effect or meaning of colors, we can see colors separately and in bright shades	The perception of the colors, subtle differences, the perception of alternating colors
<b>Perception of shapes</b>	Perception of separate details and given schematic points	Details to be considered in relation to the whole, shapes and groupings we imagine associative and intuitive
<b>Spatial vision</b>	Perception of objects on their space dimension in isolation from itself	Relation between man and object that is perceived
<b>The ability to create plastic ideas</b>	Perception supports this ability very little and it is almost absent	This ability is very active in apperception
<b>Other senses</b>	Perception inspires just slightly, does not have any impact on them or have some impact unintentionally	Strongly interested in, all percept are present on sight
<b>Thinking</b>	Nonobjective	Objective
<b>Feeling</b>	Less attendance	Full attendance
<b>Attitude</b>	Prejudice because of memories, ideology and self-evaluation	Open to unknown, without prejudice

The special importance of color therapy tables is by Rosenbauer (1999) to stimulate energy processes that are involved in vision using complementary colors, shapes and contrasting background. Intensive observation of a colored object on a contrasting background encourages the creation of afterimages on the retina (we call them contrasting images or colors). Training strengthens each part of the eye, which taking part in the adoption and transformation light power of vision and ability to further its transmission and storage. This increases the ability of visual cells to produce and to maintain visual pigment. It increases the intensity of vision.

### **Colours**

In chromatotherapeutic (colour) charts there are stated polychromatic colours that consist of pigments of brighter and darker shades of wider wave range. Unintentional so-called saccadic activity happens in relaxed watching. This activity is concerned of very rapid micro-motion which eye uses to observe an object of interest and can also perceive slight shades of colour. Various visual cells perceive them and this shifting urges them constant activity.

### **Shapes**

As well shapes as colours incite eye in visual perception to observe contrast outlines, contours and to copy them by slight motions that we are not usually aware of. Cells in retina, where the reflection shapes, are activated and create visual pigment that is transformed into a visual energy and relay the message of shapes into brain. In retina some visual cells are special arranged and connected just to recognize shapes. They are stimulated only if in retina certain forms reflect or if these forms can be found on exact position or motion.

There are content (tank) and diverging (stellar) shapes in colour tables. Tank shape lead the sight from centre of figure to outlines and then back to the centre. This form incites the sight to centre, to unify and to find the centre. The stellar form instigate the sight from centre to toe.

### **Background**

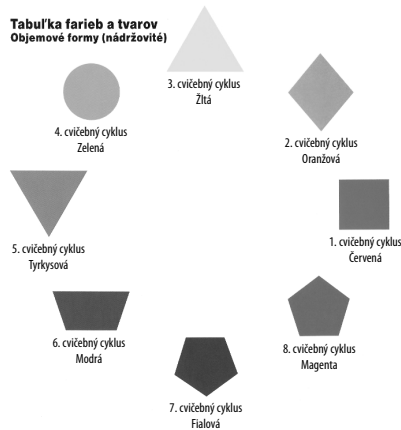
In tables (or any bright background) white background induces the visual cells on the periphery of retina to transform accumulated pigment into visual energy. Black background incites peripheral visual cells to stop their activity. Grey background creates a balance between regenerating and transforming cells.

### **Principle of polarity**

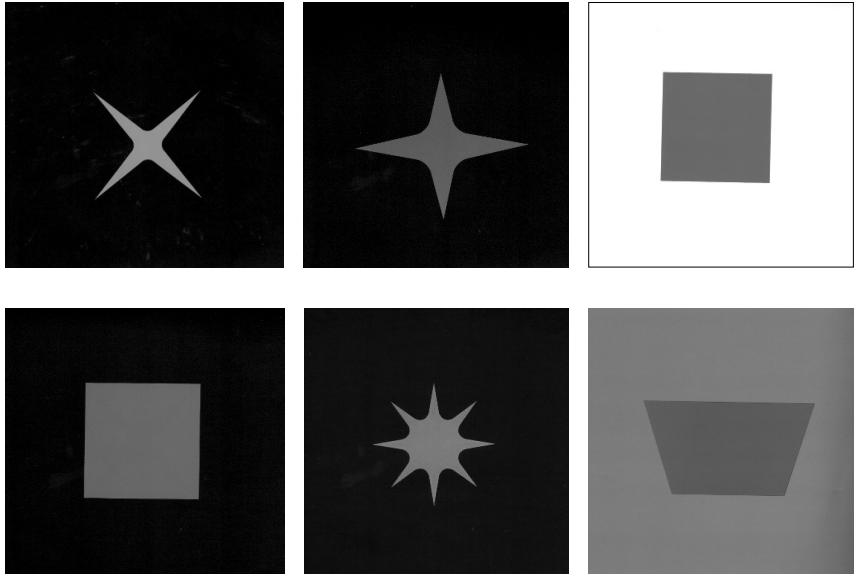
Cycle of exercises with colour tables is based on principle of polarity that is basic principle of human visual activity. Only in changing motion, between light and

dark (first polarity) the visual pigment is formed without which we would not be able to see.

Whole program of exercises on colour tables takes approximately 20–30 minutes. It covers 8 basic colours and 8 basic shapes (so-called tank-like) and other derived shapes and colours (see pictures).



**Picture 1:** Colours and shapes.  
Source: Rosenbauer, 1999.



**Picture 2:** Sample of some chromatotherapeutic (colour) charts. Source: Rosenbauer, 1999.

### ❖ **Look at me**

Look at me: a resource manual for the development of residual vision in multiply impaired children. Authors: A. J. Smith & K. S. Cote. (1982). Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Optometry. Philadelphia. 157p.

This handbook focuses on mediating of basic information as well as on evaluation and on didactic methods indispensable for pedagogues who want to contribute to achieve optimal level of visual skills in multiply impaired children. This handbook includes these basic domains:

- special reasons
- basic eye anatomy
- basic optic principles of eye functioning
- frequent eye malfunctions and eye diseases
- sensory integration
- evaluation of functional sight
- sequence of visual stimulation
- other activities

In Slovakia there is a translation with completed chapters: Functional sight and sight stimulation (part I) and Functional sight and sight stimulation (part II).

### ❖ **Proposal for work with multiple impaired children**

This material is solid compilation of proposals and ideas that can help in work with individuals with sight and multiple disabilities. We can find a lot of advice how to work with sight and multiply impaired children as well as special or educational recommendation.

Translation by Makovičová (1997) contains also other chapters:

- self-serving
- orientation and mobility
- Braille system
- sensory-motor integration
- management behaviour
- work with multiply impaired children
- pre-work preparation

This work is frequently used not only in centres of special pedagogic consultancy but also in fieldwork.

### ❖ **Reach Out and Teach**

This material focuses on saturation the educational need of parents of sight and small multiply impaired children. The handbook is written for parents on the basis of their needs and wishes. Program contents 4 parts:

1. GUIDE FOR PARENTS – contents information about timely development of child with activities and proposals that can support child's development in its domestic environment.
2. WORKBOOK – or Book of success with sections where the growth and development of child can be written.
3. SERIES OF SLIDES – for brief introduction of handbook to parents
4. MANUAL FOR TEACHERS – to help teachers to adapt this material into their own practice.

Guide for parents and workbook can be used by parents, but also specialists independently but also with help of consultant. These two parts are closely interconnected. Parent reads about certain section in the Guide and then he can practically apply it in Workbook. After finishing a section, read knowledge can be used in practice with actual child.

Chapters refer mainly to reading of child signals, to copying with child disability, to creating of child personality, interaction in family, development of motor activity, fine motor activity (grasp, touch, release, wrist rotation, insert something in mouth, chose of toys, writing and drawing), to everyday life and communication (educational methodology, communication's practice, falling behind in speech development...), to sensory development, to cognitive development, to sensory integration etc.

### ❖ **Overview of child development from prenatal period to 8 year**

Translation of book *By the Ages* by Allen-Marotz came out under Portál publisher in 2002. This book is an excellent help and source of ideas not only for specialists, but also for parents of children with disabilities. It contents a survey of the most important knowledge about child development and possible relevant information of child development from prenatal period to 8year of child's life. At first authors proceed in three-month-cycles and then in year-cycles. In each period they describe corporal, motor, cognitive and social development and also what we can expect the child to do in particular period of life. Authors present some advice e.g. how can be child's skills developed in particular period. Last part of the book is dedicated to children with special education needs.

This work contents information about many skills that the child should reach in particular life's phase. It can be an inexhaustible source of possibilities and ideas

for stimulating and developing activities with a child for parents and also for consultant.

❖ **260 exercises for early childhood by Walter Strassmeier**

This work is set of suggestions and activities designated to support active development of child in age from birth to 5. Through games it allows determining level of development of child in various fields such as gross and fine motor skills, perception, speech, thinking, social development etc. Exercises stated in this book above all help to stimulate and develop child complexly. Practical part of book contents suggestions and methodological advice for whole scale of activities that can be implemented not only in work with children without but also with disabilities. Exercises contents aim, methodological instruction and annotation on other follow-up exercises.

❖ **Reynell-Zinkin developmental scales for children with sight disability**

The authors offer a space for specialists to create their own optimal helping plan to support the development of child with sight disability. The range describes evaluating separately for sightless children and separately for children partially sighted.

The range consists of two parts, the first of which focuses on *mental development* (social adaptation, sensory-motor learning, exploring the area, responding to sound and understanding speech, vocalization and expressive language, and communication) and the second describes *motor development*.

❖ **Frostig's test of visual perception**

Test, or from another perspective, the thematic program by Marianne Frostig, focuses on visual perception. The test contains five subtests concentrating on visual-motor coordination, on the distinction between figure and background, on invariability of shape, the distinction of position in space and on spatial relations (Kastelová, 2012).

In this test, as well as in others, but mainly in Oregon program, or at a scale Reynell-Zinkin we assume that an experienced special educator can use these scales not only to diagnose a child and diagnosis of his visual skills, but also it can be changed into form when particular topics will serve as a guide on how to work with the child. In this way this tool can be understood as a rich source of ideas for activities with the child with focus on the complex development of a child.

❖ **Basal stimulation (A. Fröhlich)**

*The basic concept of basal stimulation model* is based on the knowledge that it is not possible to capture a meaningful distinction between body and soul. We can

only touch the whole person with available methods and approaches. But intentional distinction between physical and mental action is inadmissible, because the human being is inseparable (Frohlich, A, 1990).

Each person perceives by means of the senses, of the sense organs that arise and develop already in the embryonic stage and they have irreplaceable importance from birth to death. Through the senses he perceives himself and the world around him. Thanks to the ability to perceive, we have learned to move and communicate. *Movement, perception and communication influence each other.* Perception allows movement and in contrast communication is possible thanks to movement and perception. The concept of basal stimulation promotes perception, locomotion and communication (Friedlová, 2003).

*The basic elements of the concept of basal stimulation* are movement, communication and perception and their close interconnection. The concept of basal stimulation allows people to store their life habits in memory pathways with changes in these three areas of support, and so pointed stimulation of the sense organs, using the capabilities of the human brain. The aim of stimulating of the stored memories is to reactivate the brain activity and thus promote the perception, communication and momentum of individuals (Friedlová, 2007).

The basic principle of basal stimulation is finding that using a body we can actually put individual into sharing experiences and perceptions, while taking into consideration the individual child development, not development corresponding to their calendar age. Basal stimulation system assumes that each person is programmed on his own development, which can be properly support in its differentiation (Vítková, 2001).

Basal stimulation stands on *four theoretical bases* (Stupková, 2006):

1. neurophysiological model of development
2. genetics and developmental psychology
3. knowledge from physiotherapy (bases on concept by spouses Bobath)
4. knowledge from psychology (theories by A. Adler, theory of early form of self-regulation)

*Concept of basal stimulation techniques* to support of client's perception are divided on basic and super structural stimulations.

Basic stimulations comprise of (Friedlová, 2003):

- Somatic
- Vestibular
- Vibratory

Super structural stimulation consists of:

- Optical
- Auditive
- Tactile
- Olfaktoric
- Diametric stimulation

In member countries of EU basic stimulation is a very popular concept and it is an interventionist method in special education and nursing. Basic stimulation stands on holistic approach to human being and impossibility to separate body from soul.

### 3 Research

In our research project, which we implemented with Kapičáková (2012) we focused on proposal and application of concept of basal stimulation on individuals with multiple disability. We proposed and applied short-term program of basal stimulation on four recipients. We were implementing basal stimulation in duration of 10 days. We met every day in the morning or afternoon. Adapted to the percipients' daily regime, we met in time, when percipients were after meal, relaxed and had met biological needs. Meetings focused on basal stimulation were realized in therapeutic room, in the white and dark snoezelen room. Planning short-term program and choice of technique were based on anamneses dialogues with specialists, study of client's documentation and biographical anamneses. First meeting we focused on establishing of communication, mutual contact, inducing trust, confidence and sense of security.

The main aim of short-term program of basal stimulation was to stimulate the perception, perception of one's body, its borders, the same as stimulation of sensory perception through somatic, vibration, vestibular, optical, auditive, tactile and olfactory stimulation. Because percipients were individuals with multiple disability and were immobile, basal stimulation was for them very suitable method. During realization of basal stimulation we proceed by ten principles of basal stimulation.

Our planning of short-term intensive program of basal stimulation for every one individual we built on holistic view on them, on dialog with persons and through autobiographic questionnaire. We focused on information about health, particular characteristics resulting from disability, but mainly on information about their interests, hobbies, feelings, about features of their personalities. We tried to find out what is stressful for them, what they do not like, we were interested in their sociability and daily routine. During planning process of basal stimulation and planning other intervention programs is according to our opinion very important and necessary the perfect knowledge of individual and approaching to him/her to a bio-psycho-social being.



During the meetings designed and realized by us, we tried to respect individual development of psychic processes and specification of individual and according to this to create comprehensive and clear impulses for every individual and thus to gain their trust, certainty and friendship. Since we were strange people for individuals with multiple disabilities, we tried to provide them known impulses, we tried to connect it with pleasurable experiences and feelings and through this cut off uncertainty and distrust. With the aim to support perception, communication, movement and new experiences, we implemented to our meetings step by step new unknown elements. According to our opinion basal stimulation is a method which creates friendships; it is a method about feelings, experiences and gentle approach.

Techniques of basal stimulation are mostly realized during early age in children with severe disturbance of development, but also in individuals with multiple disabilities in every period of life. This concept is based on child's experiences from intrauterine development (Hornáková, 1999). During our research project we found and confirmed that vibration, vestibular and somatic stimulus activated memories and previous experiences in individuals with multiple disability. For example, percipient K., during vestibular stimulus pronounced word "mama, mamí", words were echolalic, but were emotionally tinged. We believe, that it reminded her situations when her mother swing her in arms. This percipient was on week stay. Second percipient B. was from early age in children's home and did not feel parental love, she was in arms as in limited space and her body was in limited space too and through this was supported increasing of her perception. She perceived vibrations during talking, scent, what is olfactory stimulations and swaying provided her vestibular stimuli. On every of these stimuli she reacted very active and through her own positive reactions.

During our research we noticed that within jointly swaying they turned head from one side to another side in direction of swaying, when we stopped, they stopped too with turning head. According to Friedlová (2003, s. 21), position nest "allows individuals to rest and creates a pleasant feelings within the meaning 'I feel good', and while offering them a sense of security and improving the body's own borders." This position is based on the experiences that we felt when we developed in the womb of our mother and helps us more intensive perceive the different parts of our body. This statement confirmed and we agree with it because our experience with percipient tells us, this position on one hand calm her and on the other hand helps her to support perception. When percipient L. was upset, we layed her in position "nest", she started to perceive more intense and can better express her positive reaction. This position was also liked by percipient B.

Skin touches and body touches act emotionally, encouraging and stabilizing. They can be seen as a form of systematically and regularly recurring tenderness, which indicates the closeness and attention.

It is the most intense form of communication (Vítková, 2001). Communication by basal stimulation is somatic dialogue, which overcomes communication barriers and creates an atmosphere of boyfriend love confidence. By the concept of basal stimulation Andreas Fröhlich (2009) states that the most basic means of communication is through touch and just feel we can enter into association with other people and introduce them to our presence. With this statement we agree because we succeeded in our research through touch to enter the world of selected individuals and to build a relationship with them full of confidence and safety. Already in the middle of a meeting they managed to know our voice when we walked around they smiled on us, rotated to see us and sought to establish communication.

In our short-term intensive program of basal stimulation can be observed in percipient L. as through somatic dialogue changed her attitude towards staff with which she often did not come into contact and allowed them to touch her – caressing her, hug her ... For example, the percipient K. after meeting basal stimulation with patience while she is waiting to eat and made no outcry. Hornáková (2004) states that when an individual initiates to arrange an appropriate manner gives it to him in motor response.

With this statement we identify as we had the opportunity to observe the percipients in our survey sample, that through incentives, which we encourage them to perception, those induced motor responses. For example percipient B., who used at least lower limbs relegated them pointing the snake, which was around the legs, or when we stimulate the body in the soothing somatic stimulation, lift the legs turning around for the flashing lights mirror balls. We share the view Friedlová (2009) that one of the many effects of basal stimulation is also soothe, relax and unwind.

These reactions can be also observed on the individuals with multiple disabilities, with whom we worked. At the beginning of the meeting were spasmodic and colicky or restless and finally managed to get released limb spasms, induce relaxation and calm.

Percipient D., who had Rett Syndrome, manage to express her satisfaction, with satisfied gaze and reducing scratching and eating fingers and a quick smile.

Basal stimulation provides various breathing techniques that help particular individual with multiple disabilities perceive their body, and breathing is a good technique to make contact. Even in our meetings we used to start the meeting contact by breathing, either through the laying his hands on the chest of an individual, or an individual leaning back on our chest massage or stimulating respiration. In our opinion, these techniques have great communicative value. During intervention meetings planned and arranged by us we were able to convince the basal stimulation helps to break down the fear of the unknown space and darkness. We could see it on the percipient L., who does not like dark room *snoezelen*, because in it he feels dissatisfied. But before we introduce him there, we encourage him in a dry basis, we

have given him there somatic stimulation and then we moved him into a dark room, we gradually and turn on and off lighting effects. In a dark room, we realized jointly contact breathing, not to worry, feel confident and safe. Based on the experience and information we come to conclusion that basal stimulation is a very suitable method for individuals with multiple disabilities, because they develop in all areas, is challenging, respecting their individuality and is based on scientific knowledge of the human body functioning and psychological condition.

### **Evaluation of research activities**

On meetings by means of techniques of basal stimulation we managed to raise contact, communication with the percipients, to promote the perception of its own body position in space and sensory perception. By getting the percipient conducted basic stimulation every day, it was possible to notice their changes quickly. Percipient got used to it that we devoted to them every day. We received feedback from specialists, the percipient are calmer, cheerful, not nervous and managed to eliminate mood swings.

In general, selected individuals with visual and multiple disabilities responded positively to basal stimulation techniques. Vestibular stimulation all experienced the most intense. This stimulation was conducted with all selected individuals except percipient D., as it was very difficult for her and she did not cooperate in moving and in motion, she was hypotonic and lethargic, which is one of the manifestations of her disability.

Concept of basal stimulation techniques require continuous training and proper implementation to achieve the therapeutic goal. In individuals with severe multiple disabilities activities are extremely reduced, and often limited to the most elementary vital actions. Using of basic stimuli it is possible at least partially to expand horizons of perception of one's body and the outside world. The concept of basal stimulation is based on perception and allows interaction between individuals and the environment. It ensures pleasant body feelings and mediates experiences of the body. It is the most important area for learning for individuals with severe disability that can be provided only on the basis of positive perception of emotional relationship, containing basic interaction and communication support and implementing through the activities of the day.

The conclusion of this discussion, we completed with approach by Housarová et al. in Hájková (2009) on the basal stimulation According to their opinion using of techniques and procedures of basal stimulation leads to experiencing of pleasant feelings and success, to basic social communication, creating of foundation on which further phases of special pedagogical action.

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# Effect of hearing impairment on academic achievement of secondary school students in Abeokuta North Local Government Area of Ogun State

(scientific paper)

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the effect of hearing impairment on academic achievements of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Abeokuta North Local Government Area in Ogun State. To achieve the purpose of the study, three hypotheses were formulated. The experimental design was adopted for the study. A total sample of thirty respondents (15 normal hearing students i.e. a control group and 15 hearing impaired students i.e. an experimental group) were randomly selected for the study. The selection for the control group i.e. normal hearing students was done through simple random collection to match against the 15 hearing impaired students available in senior secondary school 1 (SSSI). The teacher-made tests in English language was used as instrument for data collection. To test the hypotheses, and to ascertain whether to accept or reject them, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient(r) analysis was used. The 0.05 level of significance was used for the statistical testing of each hypothesis with critical value and degrees of freedom. The results show that there is a significant influence of hearing impairment on language development, poor language development on academic achievement and the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.*

*Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were proffered.*

**Key words:** *hearing impairment, academic achievement, social problems, academic problems, skills of teaching*

## 1 Introduction

Education, in all its ramification has been associated with one form of evaluation criterion or the other, for assessing the achievement level of those acquiring it, be it adults or children. It is from this purpose that tests and examinations are adminis-

trated at all levels of schooling and at given intervals to ascertain whether the learners are progressing or retrogressing. Since different individuals also have varying abilities, educationists have been wise enough to stratify education, and as well design eligibility test to determine who should proceed to next level of schooling and who should not.

It is well established that the educational achievement of the hearing impaired has attracted the attention of so many individuals. Scholars have consistently pointed to the difficulties experienced by both teachers and the hearing impaired students in their academic work.

Hearing impairment during childhood years causes a serious decline in academic progress, which is compounded by their inability to speak or to express themselves and the lack of language to communicate. As such, the hearing impaired student suffers a setback due to inability to communicate in the chosen language effectively. Often, teachers find difficult to communicate ideas and other abstract concepts which utilize verbal communication. This has greatly impeded their ability to comprehend abstract concepts.

Nwazuoke (1993) in his study of academic and social problems of hearing impaired students agreed that they suffer some academic setback which he attributed to the lack of skills of teaching the hearing impaired students by most teachers. Consequently, the gap between the vocabularies of students with normal hearing and those with hearing loss widens with age. Students with hearing loss do not catch up without intervention. American speech language hearing association (ASLHA), (2005) posits that there are four major ways in which hearing impairment affects the hearing impaired academically. These are:

- It causes a delay in development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language)
- The language deficit causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement
- Communication difficulties often lead to social isolation and poor self-concepts
- It may have an impact on vocational choices.

Clearly, ASLHA affirms that the hearing impaired students have difficulties with all areas of academic achievement especially reading and mathematical concepts. Students with hearing loss often cannot hear quiet speech sounds such as “s”, “sh”, “f” and “t” and therefore do not include them in their speech, thereby making their speech difficult to understand. Also, the hearing impaired students cannot hear words ending with “s” or “ed”. This leads to misunderstanding and misuse of verb tense, pluralization and non agreement of subject and verb.

More, the hearing impaired students may not hear their own voices when they speak. They may speak too loudly or not loudly enough. They may sound like they



are mumbling because of poor stress, poor inflection of poor rate of speaking when compared with the normal hearing students.

Okuyibo (1993), supporting the above views maintained that educationally, hearing impairment has some adverse effect on its victims. On the long run, hearing impairment translates into the feelings of academic inferiority with their hearing counterparts.

It is generally believed and obvious that the hearing impaired students are found to be underachievers and delayed in academic achievements. The foreign problem has prompted the researcher to look into the root of these problems which is believed to be caused by difficulties in acquiring language, inability to adequately relate in the school setting coupled with the methods used in teaching the hearing impaired students.

In this study, an attempt is made to highlight the effect of hearing impairment on academic achievement of secondary school students with hearing impairment.

## **2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of hearing impairment on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Abeokuta North Local government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was aimed at determining the:

- Effect of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students
- Influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. Influence of hearing impairment on language development of the hearing impaired students.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the stated purpose, these research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- There is no significant influence of hearing impairment on languages development of the hearing impaired students.
- There is no significant effect of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.
- There is no significant influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.

### 3 Literature review

#### **Hearing impairment and language development:**

According to Ojile (2006), hearing impairment is a general term indicating a hearing disability, which may range in severity from mild to profound. It includes those known as deaf and hard to a hearing person. On the other hand, language is an important instrument of thought, for it enables us to systematize experience. According to Hallaham and Kauffman in Obi 2006, language is referred as the communication of ideas through arbitrary system of symbols that are used according to certain rules that determine meaning.

In discussing hearing impairment and language development, emphasis is placed on how hearing impairment is likely to affect the child's ability to develop language because of the close link between hearing impairment and delay in language development. Hearing impairment is based primarily on the basis of spoken language abilities. Davis (1988) observed that vocabulary skills differentiated students with hearing impairment from their hearing counterparts. On the average, children with hearing impairment seemed delayed two to three years in vocabulary development. This occurs because students with hearing impairment do not learn much incident vocabulary which facilitates language development as other students without hearing impairment.

In addition, they do not learn slang use of words necessary for conversation among classmates and friends. In a survey of 367 learners with hearing impairment in Iowa, Davis reported that over one fourth of these children had repeated at least one grade because they were less accepted by peers due to the hearing impairment that affected their language development. Also, the hearing impaired individuals develop language in a similar pattern like their hearing counterparts but slower and poorer.

At age 5, the hearing impaired child may acquire a vocabulary of 50 words while a normal hearing child acquires 2,000 words (Davis, 1988). This means that the inability of the hearing impaired child to convey or hear sounds or spoken words through the hearing mechanisms generally called the ear affects the child ability to acquire language.

More, Abednego (1995) and Ezugwu (1985) affirmed that hearing impairment manifests itself in retardation of language acquisition skills in the hearing impaired students when compared with their hearing counterparts. That is, the hearing impaired students are most profound in vocabularies and least apparent in mathematics computation. Deafness or loss of hearing creates a major handicap to the development of accurate communication because the hearing impaired child has no concept of language which is the basis for communication. As a result of this loss, hearing impaired students are already well behind their hearing age mates in both language development, cognitive and social development that comes from interactions with parents and peers using natural language.

### **Poor language development and academic achievement of hearing impaired students:**

The hearing impaired individuals have been found to be underachievers and delayed in academic skills due to poor language development and lack of auditory exposure to their environment resulting from the impairment. Mba (1981) said that it is only through language that the individual make his/her feelings, motives, wishes, ideas, intention and understanding known to others. Since all academic functions are performed with good understanding and application of language, the hearing impaired students suffer a setback due to the lack of language for effective communication when compared with their hearing counterparts.

Also, Reamer in Ezugwu (1985) observed that hearing impairment constitutes a serious barrier to normal educational process. This assertion according to him may stem from the fact that inability to hear normally and develop language makes the task of schooling more difficult. The poor academic achievement of hearing impaired students may also result from the difficulties that they experience in acquiring language and communication skills. It is recognized that poor language and communication skills among these students have serious consequences on their reading abilities.

Due to the lack of or poor language to facilitate their learning, it becomes difficult for their teachers to communicate idea to them. As such they passed out of school and are seen by the society as academically inferior to their hearing counterparts. Poor language development or the lack of it is seen as the root cause of nearly all the problems hearing impaired students contend with later in life (Mba 1981). It is established that the hearing impaired students significantly performed below their hearing counterparts. This is manifested in English and language related skills, such as listening, reading, writing and speaking which are heavily dependent on language and not on abstract thinking such as mathematics as the major constraints to the academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.

### **Use of instructional methods and academic achievement of the hearing impaired students:**

An instructional method used here encompasses the various approaches and ways adopted by the teachers to clearly impart knowledge to the hearing impaired students. The instructional methods used to instruct the hearing impaired students includes: lip reading, total communication, sign language, Rochester method, etc. Lip reading is the systematic way of deciphering the meaning of spoken words through the observation of the lip movement. Total communication is the use of various methods of communication that enhances and clarifies the understanding of the concept. Rochester method is the use of finger spelling simultaneously with speech, while sign language is the use of finger-spelling to form a word or sentences for meaningful understanding of the concept etc.

Instructional methods affect the student academic achievement positively, but when it is misused, it grossly affects the academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. When discussing the use of instructional methods and academic achievement of the hearing impaired students, emphasis is placed on how the misuse of these instructional methods affects the hearing impaired students in their academic achievement. Atukum (2002) opined that teachers of the hearing impaired students are expected to possess sufficient knowledge of various methods of communication and should be able to use any efficiently when called upon to do so. The choice of any method however should be determined by the possibilities of its meeting most appropriately the need of the hearing impaired students. There must be flexibility of usage of these methods when instructing the hearing impaired due to their varying capacity of understanding.

The method of communication used does not determine the success or failure of the hearing impaired student, but the manner in which communication is used in teaching-learning processes. Salaam and Situ (2005) posited that a poor teacher's use of instructional methods results in failure on the part of the hearing impaired students and poor feedback for the teacher. The hearing impaired students suffer a grave handicap when this occurs because they become helpless in the face of unclear complex messages or concepts. For instance, sign language as an instructional method is said to have its own grammatical structure for effective communication. It has been used in educating the hearing impaired students in all the nations of the world from primary to tertiary level. It is regretted that in most schools observed the sign language skills of the special education teachers are grossly poor.

Raji (2003) defined sign language as a system of communication devoid of sound but movement of the fingers, hands, arms and the head simultaneously or at variance which produces meaningful messages. As sign language is a method of teaching devoid of sound, it is obvious that the hearing impaired students find very difficult to identify words that have similar sound. The case is similar with the hearing impaired students who could lip read. Word endings such as 's', 'sh', and quiet speech sound such as 's', 'f', 't' and 'k' are often very difficult to lip read. Also, where the teacher is speaking while facing the blackboard, the students will not be able to lip read what the teachers say, and may sometimes focus on the interpreter and not on the teacher that is speaking. This could lead to misunderstanding and misuse of past tense, verb tense, pluralization, non-agreement of subject and verb, and possessives.

Based on the foregoing, Wood, Griffith and Howarth in Fatakun et al, (2003) alluded that successful communication lies in the manner rather than in the mode of communication. Therefore, teachers of hearing impaired students need specialization in speech reading and should be able to receive and express themselves clearly and effectively through sign language. Thus, the teacher's ability to communicate effec-

tively will enhance their understanding and improve the academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.

### **Methodology**

**Design:** In this study, the research used an experimental design which is meant to allow variable (independent) to be manipulated and their effect on some other variables (dependent) observed or measured.

**Population:** The population of this study consists of 200 students of Saint Peter's college Olomore, Abeokuta who are in the senior secondary school I, the population consists of hearing impaired and normal hearing students of the school.

**Sample:** A total number of 30 students were randomly selected, 15 are hearing impaired students (10 males and 5 female) presently in the senior secondary school I (SSSI), 2012/2013 academic session. The sampling technique employed in selecting the sample size was the stratified random sampling technique.

**Instrumentation:** The main instrument used for data collection was the teacher-made test in English language. The teacher-made test in English was constructed and administered to the respondents to enable them choose the alternatives that can best describe their opinions.

The teacher-made test in English contains three parts. Part I focused on words that contain sound represented by a given phonetic symbol while part II contained a reading passage and part III pronouncing of words and identification of their differences.

**Validity of the instrument:** the instrument used for data collection was validated using face to content validation. Each of the items on the teacher made test were formulated to relate hypotheses and topic under investigation.

**Reliability of the instrument:** to determine the reliability of the instrument used for this study, test-retest reliability was conducted on a smaller sample size using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) and the result yielded 0.80. This shows a high level of reliability

### **Hypothesis one**

There is no significant influence of hearing impairment on language development of the hearing impaired students. The result of the analysis is presented in table 1.

**Table 1:** Pearson product moment correlation analysis of hearing impairment on language development of the hearing impaired student (N = 30)

Groups	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Normal hearing students (control group)	330	21,872	13,029	0.616
Hearing impaired students (experimental group)	195	18,399		

Significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .361$ ,  $df = 28$

The result of the statistical analysis as presented in table I indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.616 is greater than the critical r-value of .361 at .05 level of significance with 28 degrees of freedom. The result is significant and the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of hearing impairment on language development of the hearing impaired students.

### Hypothesis two

There is no significant effect of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired student (N = 30)

Groups	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Normal hearing students (control group)	318	20,398	12,749	0.955
Hearing impaired students (experimental group)	200	8,610		

Significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .361$ ,  $df = 28$

The result of the statistical analysis as presented in table 2 indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.955 is greater than the critical r-value of .361 at .05 level of significance with 28 degrees of freedom. The result is significant and the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant affect of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.

### Hypothesis three

This is no significance influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3.

**Table 3:** Pearson product moment correlation analysis of influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. (N = 30)

Groups	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Normal hearing students (control group)	298	17,680	10,829	0.939
Hearing impaired students (experimental group)	180	7,378		

Significant at .05 level, critical  $r = .361$ ,  $df = 28$

The result of the statistical analysis as presented in table 3 indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.939 is greater than the critical r-value of .361 at .05 level of significance with 28 degrees of freedom. The result is significant and the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students.

## 4 Discussion of findings

This section deals with the discussion of findings of the hypotheses directing the study. The result of the first hypothesis indicates that there is a significant influence of hearing impairment on language development of the hearing impaired students. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with Davis (1988) who posited that vocabulary skills differentiated students with hearing impairment from hearing individuals because children with hearing impairment seemed delayed two to three years in vocabulary development. This is because students with hearing impairment do not learn incident vocabulary, which facilitate language development, as other students without impairment do. The result of the second hypothesis indicates that there is a significant effect of poor language development on academic achievement of the hearing impaired students. The finding of this hypothesis is in agreement with Mba (1981) who said that it is only through language the individual makes his/her feelings, motives, wishes, ideas, intentions and understanding known to others. Since the hearing impaired students could not develop language as others, they suffer a setback due to lack or poor language for effective communication when compared with their hearing counterparts. Also, Reamer in Ezugwu (1985) observed that hearing impairment constitutes a serious barrier to the normal educational process. This assertion according to him may stem from the fact that the inability to hear normally and develop language makes the task of schooling more difficult.

The result of the third hypothesis indicates that there is a significant influence of the use of instructional methods on academic achievement of the hearing impaired

students. The findings of this hypothesis is also in line with Salaam and Situ (2005) who observed that poor teacher's use of instructional methods result in failure on the part of the hearing impaired students and poor feedback for the teachers. The hearing impaired students suffer a grave handicap when this occur because they become helpless in the face of unclear complex messages or concepts. Also, Raji (2003) affirmed that sign language is a system of communication devoid of sound but movement of the fingers, hands arms and head simultaneously which produce meaningful messages. Due to this lack of sound in sign language, the hearing impaired students find it difficult to identify words that have similar sound. This greatly affects their sentence structure resulting in poor performance academically.

## 5 Conclusion and recommendation

Based on the findings, it is noted that hearing impairment affects language development due to the inability of the hearing impaired students to develop vocabulary and to hear normally like their hearing counterparts. Also, language development which is poorly developed in the hearing impaired students reduces their academic achievement because language itself differentiates human beings from animals and aids the actualization of oral communication, without it, individual faces the problem of inadequate learning, interaction and sharing.

More so, the misuse of the various instructional methods by their teachers has greatly impeded the academic progress of the hearing impaired students. Thus, the following recommendations are made:

- the hearing impaired students should be given ample exposure to language development processes with the help of appropriate speech therapist. They should be encouraged to interact with the normal hearing children to develop linguistic power.
- Parents should provide enabling environment for their children to communication with speech and develop language communication skills before school age. This could be achieved by attending workshops and seminars on hearing impairment.
- Well-trained special education teachers should be employed for proper use of instructional methods such that adequate instruction is given to the hearing impaired students.
- There should be in-service training for old special education teachers to enable them update their knowledge with the numerous innovation brought about by experts in the field.
- Federal and state government should offset the short supply of well trained special education teachers by providing grants and encouraging more people to study special education so that more professionals will be in supply.



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# Poetry therapeutic intervention in patients with postoperative cardio care

(scientific paper)

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**Abstract:** *The paper provides a description of options of the poetry therapeutic effective intervention in patients who have had myocardial infarction and staying within their rehabilitation at the spa. Author of this text himself after myocardial infarction had the opportunity to contact these clients in Teplice spa, the sanatorium Janacek. In the summer 2013 he realized a research in which he used his own poetic presentation to motivate and approach better personal contacts, and trust. Subsequently he held talks with individual clients, drafted, distributed and evaluated the questionnaire and he even motivated some clients to write their own poetic attempts.*

**Keywords:** *Myocardial infarction, coronary angioplasty, pacemaker, coronary arteries, implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, poetry therapy, coronary heart disease*

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the professionals of special education and general public to the experience of the first poetry therapeutic intervention in patients after myocardial infarction. The aim of the author is also to organize the experience with regard to specifics of the clients. This specificity is determined not only “thanks to” surgical procedures, but also the senior age of most of the clients.

## 2 The clientele of the spa Teplice

The clientele of the spa sanatorium Janáček in Teplice consists of a large majority of patients who physically and mentally cope with the consequences of myocardial infarction. It is treated either conservatively in a smaller number of cases, or especially

in the last decades by interventional cardiology – coronary angioplasty. There are also patients who were treated with cardiac surgery for ischemic heart disease, or after surgery or prosthetic heart valves, or who have engaged in combined operations on the coronary vascular bed or flaps. Many patients physically and mentally cope with the necessary, but often initially negatively perceived intrusion into their body (life with a pacemaker, operations on the heart, implantable cardioverter-defibrillator...).

Fully healthy people do not go to “cardio spa” in the Czech Republic. This is due to lower capacity of spas and relatively little social awareness. This is surprising, because cardiovascular disease is also currently the leading cause of mortality of the inhabitants. A small percentage of relatively healthy clients use only the preventive educational visits, which are implemented in less lucrative winter months. A number of these patients have previously had heart problems (Špinar. J., Vítovec. J., 2007).

Some patients in the recovery period at the spa have occasional chest pain, the sweating, heart palpitations, shortness of breath sensations, tingling, numbness of teeth and more often atypical symptoms of disorders of the circulatory system. They are mostly elderly patients. Communication with them is difficult in some cases and reflects the specificities of social interaction occurring in verbal and non-verbal contact with the client with a disability or weakness at the senior age.

An important problem which this spa clientele faces is also a need for a permanent lifestyle change. Spa environment is an excellent training area for this change. A typical client should drop here their unwanted habits. They should get rid of smoking, excessive overeating, should regularly and responsibly take quite a considerable amount of medicine, should limit consumption of alcoholic beverages, should comply with certain procedural regimen. These are all factors to which the patient has to cope in the spa social environment.

In the sanatorium Janáček there are patients receiving a complete spa care which is covered by their health insurance company. The stay of these patients usually lasts for three weeks. There are also patients who pay for their spa treatments fully or partly. In addition to these clients, there are also users of relaxing hospital stay, which is fully paid by them. They usually accompany a relative who has significant health problems. These clients do not participate in further described poetry therapeutic investigation and intervention.

Most patients occupy twin rooms. For a fee (about 100 CZK) per day, however, the patient may benefit from luxuriously furnished room individually.

All clients are under constant medical supervision, undergo regular medical examinations, if necessary, they also have a psychologist and other professional spa staff, especially physiotherapists, dieticians and doctors specialists.

### 3 The realization of the research

The author has decided to implement his poetry therapeutic intervention in the second part of his three-week stay. First he had to arrange the necessary permits and other requirements and try to be known among patients. This required a certain amount of time. This initial entry phase could not be underestimated, as in the case of distrust and disinterest of the planned survey it would not be attended by the required number of clients. So the author for their easy identification of his person used the specific clothing (captain's hat + mostly striped sailor shirt) and soon achieved that the clientele of the sanatorium Janáček began to recognise him as "Captain".

In addition to the selected image, the captain also tried to familiarize himself with the greatest number of patients and used the regular dance parties, participated in numerous cultural events, and he also held quite often common singing with a guitar at the Colonnade. Before poetry therapeutic performance he prepared with cultural worker of the sanatorium color posters that contained a clear indication of all necessary information, including information that "musically poetic" Evening with the Captain will be free.

The actual poetry therapeutic show was conceived as primarily receptive, approximately one hour poetry therapeutic lesson. At the end of the 'lesson' the clients were asked to fill out a short questionnaire and write a poem themselves with a spa theme. Musical and poetic show with the captain was attended by approximately 40 clients of the sanatorium Janáček. Of those, only 27 were willing to fill out the questionnaire (16 men and 11 women). The average age of respondents was 68.4 years (men 67.2 years, women 69.3 years).

The concept of the musically poetic show has the traditional standard classification of individual parts. It means that the "lighter" and entertaining introduction was followed by a presentation of poems more complex, lyrically and symbolically challenging. The conclusion was again conducted in entertaining, playful spirit.

Creative poems of traditional concepts of poetry were used. It means melodic verses with frequent onomatopoeic color and rhyme. Some poems were accompanied by guitar and balalaika, the author also used expressively accented speech. At some stages of the performance he stepped on the chair, walked around the room and used various random objects, further emphasizing the effects of individual poems.

### 4 The evaluation of the questionnaire

The questionnaire items are mostly related to music and poetic show that patients just heard and saw. The regular contact and filter items were followed by questions that focused on acquiring the desired information and opinions. The following is

a summary of the most frequent and the most interesting answers, which the author received in the questionnaire survey.

- The survey showed that less than half of participants can recall from memory a poem of two or more stanzas. (10:15) (2× answer absent)
- The most popular poets are Wolker J., J. Seifert, K. J. Erben, J. V. Sládek
- The speech of the poet in the show was liked by a total of 15 respondents, only 10 liked the text of verses, 14 liked the rhymes of verses, 10 onomatopoeia, and 16 clients liked music
- The speech of the poet was not liked by a total of 1 patient, the text of verse 7 patients, rhymes of verse 3, and 1 onomatopoeia, music 0
- The question of whether the patient thinks their relationship to poetry after today's date changed positively, a total of 13 patients responded positively and 12 negatively.
- When asked whether they think that today's poetic show could be of rehabilitation assistance, 5 patients responded positively, 17 did not know and 4 responses were negative.

The most surprising fact for the author arising from the questionnaire responses was that the patients did not like the text of his poems. A more detailed analysis of the texts based on additional interviews with some of the patients revealed that they were not very optimistic poems with the theme of death. In these cases it did not help to lighten certain topics and the use of black humor. See, for example, the following used poem.

### ***The death***

*When the bells ring behind the white wall  
When in the dome of the bed the bouquet will be added  
In funnels of sins Holy See desulphurize  
A people with incense on the roost of the ceremony  
Nod their heads above the casket lid  
Open your eyes and twist it into an arc  
At the end of the undershot see mountain meadow!*

### ***Smrt***

*Až zvonky za bílou zdí zazvoní  
Až v bání postele přibude kytice  
V trychtýřích hříchů se odsíří svatá stolice  
A lid s kadidly na hřadech obrádu  
Zakývá hlavami nad víkem truhlice  
Otevři oči a stoč je do oblouku  
Na konci předkusu uvidíš horskou louku!*

Texts about the age did not get too much positive response. See the following example:

***The time of houseleek***

*Mated old woman fumitory in the common room  
Cooked the old man gouged kohlrabi  
Quenching thirst and spindle of life  
Churned in the floor a solitary radish  
Stooping under the hump grumbled at the fireplace  
Wooden spoon into goo to make conversation  
With crutches hobbled ... sl ... ow ... ly  
From the prosthesis he created a loud willow*

***Čas netřesku***

*Spářila stařena zemědým v sednici  
Vařil si stařeček vylouplou kedlubnu  
Zhašena žízní a životem břemenem  
Kvedlal si v podlaze ředkvičku samotku  
Shrbena pod hrbem brumlala u krbu  
Vařečku do břechy aby řeč nestála  
S berlí se belhala...po...ma...lu  
Z protězy utvořil hlasitou vrbu*

It has been shown that the most positive response was recorded when using gentle, simple and rhymed poems. Musical presentation of poems was also proven to be successful. In this case the author prior to the recitation of verses used the motif of the known French songs. See the following example:

***Saint Michelle***

*I went with a pet  
Along the sun of Saint Michelle  
Where Petr Janda went too  
A lot Wents went – funny  
Where people go in minor and major  
I dreamt of Madame Pompadour  
However, the Word rolled to us, darlings  
And instead of randevous – ronda  
Or perhaps a date  
I was run over by another car  
Your Belmondo's Honda*

***Saint Michelle***

*Šel jsem si s miláčkem  
Po slunci Saint Michelle  
Kde šel i Petr Janda  
A šla spousta Šlů – sranda  
Kde lidi chodí v moll a dur  
Vysnil jsem madam Pompadoure  
Však přetočil se nám miláčkům svět  
A místo rande – ronda  
Nebo snad rande – vous  
Přejel mě jiný vůz  
Tvá Belmondova Honda*

The participants of musically poetic show could later create poems with a spa theme. I here demonstrate that they prefer uncomplicated and rhymed poetry. See the following typical examples of the work of the patients of the sanatorium Janáček:

Spa, spa, spa, We have wonderful time here We're all friends We all like each other	Lázně, lázně, lázně Máme se tu krásně Jsme tu všichni kamarádi Máme se tu všichni rádi
Well I live in the spa Drinking the spa water I go to dances I'm having fun	Dobře si v lázních žiji Lázeňskou vodu piji Na tanečky chodím V pohodě se bavím
It is not just a coincidence The spa well-being Massages, exercise, baths And now it is better for the body	Není to náhoda Ta lázeňská pohoda Masáže, cvičení, koupele A hned je lépe po těle
I drink the spa water I will live up to a hundred years With good wine I will heal my soul	Lázeňskou vodu piji Do sta let se dožiji Při dobrém vínečku Vyléčím i dušičku

In the final stage of the investigation the author conducted with selected patients (snowball method) semidirected series of interviews, from which immediately after their completion he recorded the thoughts and ideas that intrigued him. He also took into account the frequency of similar and identical testimony, and he did not fail to notice especially ideas that were heard repeatedly in interviews.

## 5 The conclusion of the investigation

Poetry therapeutic intervention questionnaire and subsequent interviews showed the following. Patients of the sanatorium Janáček tend to prefer less “sophisticated” entertainment with an emphasis on musical elements. For the next poetry therapeutic intervention it is therefore necessary to make changes in the collection of texts of poems. The text of poems is monitored by patients despite repeated explanations that this part of poetry is not so important. During the poetry therapeutic presentation there should also be possible to find more space for more direct social and verbal



interaction with the audience. It means more explaining, for example, describing when and why the poem originated, what the author wanted to convey by poems, etc. It is not too ideal to present too long series of poems without a break.

The creation of these patients in the senior age, in terms of form, do not differ much from the poetic expressions of children of primary school age. However, patients in the poems inserted repeatedly the subject of their health. They can work with rhymes, but they cannot handle the rhythm of verse and use onomatopoeia. These elements should be therefore more stressed in possible further “poetry therapeutic performance”.

In the sanatorium Janáček many patients lack especially relaxing music during procedures. Poetic production, as an adjunct therapy, they cannot well imagine. During procedures they occasionally hear the radio and usually some pandering programs.

In the sanatorium Janáček there is no special education expressive therapy provided, as an adjunct treatment of cardiovascular problems. It seems, however, that the clients would be interested in such interventions. And despite the fact that education and patient awareness of this area of supportive care are slim, the relatively long intervals between treatments would allow the insertion of expressive therapies.

The offer of cultural events that take place mostly in the evening, is rich and is positively perceived by most patients. In some cases, performers do not consider specifics of spectator clients (especially inappropriate volume of the production – either too loud or too quiet ...).

Some patients have complained to their roommate. Coexistence in some cases showed features of bullying. In the sanatorium patients have the option of anonymous communication about their difficulties or visit a psychologist, but in most cases they are shy to use these options. For these “impaired” patients a visit of any cultural show was a welcome escape from unpleasant reality of spa rooms.

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# Evaluation of successful or failed integration of intellectually gifted children by primary school educators

(scientific paper)

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**Abstract:** *The author's contribution deals with specifics of education of gifted children in elementary school. Aim of this paper is to present the results of research on evaluation of successful school integration or failure of school integration by children's educators in terms of mainstream primary schools. The research results show the most important conditions for successful and unsuccessful integration of gifted pupil by teachers. Teachers in classrooms with individual integration are more focused on the actual performance of students who could be their measure in the evaluation of their success. The group integration is accompanied by teachers in evaluating of the success and greater importance of personal giftedness and talents. According to both groups of teachers the successful school integration is based on expertise of teachers in terms of knowledge, experience and also enough time for individual access to these pupils. Study also points to the current specific problems of individual and group integration.*

**Keywords:** *gifted pupil, talent, successful school integration, individual integration, group integration*

## 1 Introduction

The study surveys the current state of knowledge of the educational-psychological aspects of gifted children and their education under contemporary conditions in the Slovak republic and it is supposed to present one of the possible perspectives on the issue through the lens of the evaluation of successfulness of school integration of gifted children by the means of a research. The research focuses on successfulness of integration of intellectually gifted pupils at primary school and evaluation of the causes of this successfulness or failure from the point of view of teachers at primary school.

## 2 Gifted children in the context of education

The questions of giftedness, talent and human skillfulness have attracted human curiosity since ever. Research in the field of giftedness has been urged forward by curiosity and the desire for knowledge as well as social need. "The problem of difference as a basic xenological problem opens yet another basic problem, 'the problem of a human'. The understanding of human actuality is a key platform of the process of coping with variance and difference" (Dojčár, 2012, p. 7). According to Hříbková (2012, p. 2) experiences from practice point to the fact that an extraordinary thought production and excellent performances in various fields are conditioned not only by abilities of an individual, but their personality features or the structure of cognitive and noncognitive characteristics. Wider definitions of giftedness, which have been appearing in past years, do not include only intellect characteristics, but also creative, motivation and social characteristics. It is obvious that each culture has its own defined idea of giftedness and the value preferences of the fields this phenomenon is related to. According to Winner (1996) three basic features of the gifted can be discussed:

1. Gifted individuals are prematurely developed.
2. They need a minimal assistance (from the adults in order to express their giftedness).
3. They want to excel in the field they are gifted in (individually, without an outer pressure and they devote their free time to it completely).

Clark (1992, p. 36, according to Laznibatová, 2001) states that while identifying individuals with a high level of intelligence it was proved that in comparison to others they manifest certain biological differences such as:

- increased production of nerve cells enabling greater development and support of neurons, increased number of dendritic fibers and the number of its connections, which increases the potential of mutual connections among neurons,
- higher number of synapses and wider range of synaptic contacts, which enables faster and more complex communication within the nerve system,
- greater activity of prefrontal area of cerebral cortex, which enables better understanding, penetrating mind and intuition,
- better utilization of the activity of alpha waves in several areas of brain, so the gifted individual is able to get to the alpha level faster and to stay there longer than a common individual, which enables them greater relaxation and better integration of brain hemispheres,
- higher synchronization of brain rhythm, enabling better concentration and attention.

Laznibatová (2001, pp. 207–228) further claims that the gifted children are above-average in many aspects in comparison to their contemporaries already in the youngest age categories (from 1–2 years of age). They learn to sit, walk and talk sooner than average children. As to spontaneous activities, according to individual anamneses, the children are lively, they react well immediately after their birth. Since their birth they tend to be spontaneously active, even hyperactive; they are very agile and bright in comparison to other children. They need less sleep, they are vital and curious. They are able to recognize people, differentiate shapes and so on. They like to discover, to experiment and they react intensively to new stimuli. Thompsom (according to Laznibatová, 2001) proved that the preference of new stimuli in early months of life of children correlates positively with higher level of intellectual performances in the age of 3. One of the recognition signs of a gifted child is an early, distinctive and fluent speech with rich vocabulary; similarly, reading activities are early. Distinctive fluent speech with rich vocabulary is typical for the preschool age, just like usage of abstract terms, foreign expressions, the ability to learn to read on their own without any help, early reading and in greater amount than other children. Mathematical abilities are often exceptional, the gifted children deal with arithmetical tasks sooner, they can manipulate spontaneously with numbers well, they manage arithmetical tasks of various difficulties. According to Pivoda (2010) a tendency toward introversion is typical for the gifted children, for intellectually gifted children in particular and personality can be very varied. It doesn't concern only the type of giftedness and the level of IQ, but naturally, it depends also on wider social environment and other circumstances of their life that determine the personality formation. The gifted children form a population that in majority of cases doesn't markedly differ in their problems from the common children population.

When assessing a talent and giftedness of children we can encounter various myths of great giftedness, which are deeply rooted in the society and apparently, unchangeable at the first sight. Musil (1989, p. 14) gives evidence of these myths in his publication in a very interesting way. It may be for example a myth that a talent is the thing of the elite; the myth of genetic dynasty says that a talent and giftedness are reserved for the higher, genetically superior social classes. The IQ myth says that giftedness is identical only with a high above-average intelligence quotient; the myth of all-divergence represents a multidimensional understanding of giftedness and creativity, creativity as an “all-human” feature. Another one is for example the myth of a sweaty genius emphasizing the meaning of motivation in a performance, which is placed on the level of skills, an ingenious myth, while the discoverable genius has the highest level of talent, the others haven't developed it; or the myth of inspiration as a mythical idea about inspiration being an inexplicable impulse, the climax of creative process. A myth, which according to Musil (1989) concerns personality of a gifted child, is the myth that giftedness always takes over by itself. The author

further discusses the myth of gender influencing demonstrations of giftedness; or a pupil – a gifted eccentric with problem behavior or a pupil having studying problems in some subjects, but being immensely interested in mathematical or literature club. Regarding the efficiency of performance and marks at school there is a myth that a gifted child has to be the most efficient one and passes with distinction; the talented pupil, naturally, has to specialize in a concrete field – discipline and the giftedness is evaluated by a teacher (Musil, 1989, p. 121).

### **3 Models of education of gifted pupils in Slovakia and the successfulness of integration**

Slovakia is one of the countries where functioning of three models of education organization of gifted pupils in a school system can be observed. These models of education organization of gifted pupils function simultaneously and their functioning is properly legally treated. The fact that all of the three models of education organization of gifted pupils function in Slovakia simultaneously can be ascribed to the missing legislation of the past, which would make one of the education of gifted pupils more favorable (Šabo, 2010). This fact should not be perceived as negative, but it should be perceived as positive in the sense of creation of the space for researches, projects verification and scientific discussion on this theme. Last but not least, this fact adds to a wider possibility of differentiation in the development of a gifted individual as a complex personality. A gifted pupil or his legal representatives have the possibility of choice among the following three models of education organization of gifted pupils (Šabo, 2010):

1. segregated (or separated) model,
2. integrated model,
3. compromise (or combined) model.

According to Šabo (2010) the **segregated model of education of gifted individuals** comes originally from the USA. The segregated education of intellectually gifted individuals can be first observed in the United States of America. Other countries dealing with segregated model of education organization of gifted pupils are: Austria, parts of Switzerland and Germany, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia. Not all of the countries allow segregated education organization of gifted individuals at all four stages (ISCED 0, 1, 2 a 3) of their schools systems. The project of segregated education organization of gifted pupils in Slovakia was elaborated by Laznibatová and entitled Programme APROGEN (1993–2007). After 5 years (1998) the first special school dealing with the development of intellectual giftedness originates in Bratislava; it became a model

for establishing similar schools in other Slovak towns, too. Schooling has a form of alternative education. The number of pupils in a class is lower than in a common school, the reason being the implementation of individual education plan. The teachers are specially trained for the development of motivation, creativity and abilities of the pupils. All of the schools closely cooperate with the parents of the gifted pupils and centers of educational-psychological counseling. General objectives of this model of education organization of gifted pupils may include:

- development and strengthening of specific skills,
- development of independence, creativity,
- willingness to try and to take risk,
- effort to solve problems,
- ability to discover self-study,
- gathering and processing information,
- ability of self-evaluation and evaluation of the others,
- strengthening dominant abilities of the gifted,
- development of physical abilities,
- forming of the personality of the gifted individual.

Duchovičová (2007) includes mainly the following positives into the specifics of a school of this kind:

- pupils acquire deepening, enriching and extending curriculum,
- pupils learn foreign language and informatics and to express their thoughts in capital letters from the first grade,
- among the methods are the method of problem based teaching, project work, heuristic methods, defense of own works,
- great emphasis on self-assessment and verbal comments in evaluation,
- partner relationship among teachers and pupils is applied; emphasis is on creating the right atmosphere,
- rich club activity is important, too,
- school cooperates with faculties and research centers,
- school cooperates with several grammar schools at the international level,
- school elaborates alternative proposals,
- school organizes international business conferences.

In general it can be said that this kind of education of gifted pupils is focused mainly on the maximal development of an individual's potential. That means subordination of curriculum to this objective. It has to be noted here that schools which originated according to the model example of the school for gifted children in Bratislava are classified as schools with alternative schooling. Dočkal (2008) ranks the following among the advantages of segregated education of gifted individuals: education of

intellectually gifted children is organized in an easier way, because the same forms and methods are applied while working with all children and they can proceed in their school work faster. On the other hand, he considers the following among the negatives: diversity of the group of intellectually gifted pupils, the risk of inadequate social development, little opportunity to learn to communicate and coexist with the contemporaries from common population, the work may lead to feelings of superiority over contemporaries from common classrooms, development of undesirable rivalry within the group of the gifted and the demands on the educational work of a teacher are extraordinary, too. Segregated education can be organized only for a sufficient number of pupils, thus, in smaller settlements it is not feasible (Dočkal 2008).

Strictly **integrated variant of education of gifted individuals** is utilized in European countries like Spain, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania and England. The aim of integration is the acquirement of the highest degree of socialization possible, which means participation in ordinary life (regarding the gifted it is also the development of their giftedness and their weak points, too; at the same time the objective of socialization is followed). Vladimír Dočkal is the author of the project of integrated education of gifted pupils in Slovakia, who elaborated and certified the project in 2000–2005. Primary schools in Lučenec and Hlohovec were included in the experimental schools, too. Socialization of an individual, development of their communication skills, focus on emotional side of personality are not that distinct in the segregated model of education of gifted pupils. It presupposes a requirement, which is fulfilled only in the integrated and combined variant of education of the gifted, namely, social contact with common part of the population. This is where the natural life situations occur that a young person has to learn to solve in order to be successful in their life. On the other hand, obviously, the cognitive part of personality is not neglected at all. Duchovičová (2007) classified conditions of successful integration of gifted individuals as follows:

1. identification of gifted children – diagnostics,
2. diagnostics of the giftedness and suggestions of the processes of its development,
3. competent teacher, professionally prepared for the work with gifted children,
4. elaboration of alternative teaching plans and curricula,
5. elaboration of supporting teaching materials, alternative students' books and educational programs,
6. provision of differentiated and individual methods according to performance and personality dispositions of individual gifted children,
7. elaboration of a new system of evaluation of the gifted,
8. reduced number of pupils in classrooms,
9. legislated conditions for the work with the gifted in regular schools.



Dočkal (2008) considers the following for main positives of integrated schooling:

- it is considered being more appropriate for the intellectually gifted with a less distinctive level of giftedness,
- more propitious social development of the gifted,
- it is recommended especially in younger school age, where the foundations of further social development of a personality are laid,
- integrated education can be carried out for any number of gifted children in any school including schools in small settlements.

According to the author, among the disadvantages of integrated education of the gifted children is the organization work of headmaster and pedagogues who implement it and the fact that due to the necessity of coordination of intellectually gifted pupils with the progress of other pupils in a classroom, their progress in educational development may be relatively slower than in the segregated variant of education. The requirements can be classified into general, administrative, material-technical and professional-personnel.

**Compromise model of education of gifted pupils** relies on acceleration of the tempo of their school education. This main aim, mission of the compromise model is carried out in the following forms:

- attendance of selected subjects by a gifted individual in a higher grade,
- another possibility is an early entering of school education, but a child should not be younger than 5 years and 8 months,
- leaping over one grade (condition being passing of exams) or the child completes two grades in one year. Skip of grade is used in our conditions rarely, especially due to a high number of requirements that need to be fulfilled during its implementation.

According to Duchovičova (2007) a certain compromise is a 8-year high school (grammar school), which provides differentiation of children according to their abilities by the means of a selection of a more difficult type of school. These grammar schools are intended for children whose study aptitude has been manifested already at primary school. At present, the mission of 8-year grammar schools has been declining and they are becoming more a matter of prestige. So called specialized grammar schools, as for example bilingual grammar schools, are appointed for pupils who excel in one of the academic fields (Šabo, 2010).

### **Examination of conditions of successful integration and causes of failed integration of the intellectually gifted at primary schools**

The very process of school integration of intellectually gifted children and mainly its successfulness are poorly examined, assessed and evaluated. The author Balážová

(2012) states “8 different areas where the success/failure rate of integration/inclusive education can be revealed or where it is possible to assess logically or identify, by the means of analysis, determinants of successful school integration/inclusive education” (Balážová, 2012, s. 99). One of these areas (IV) regards a teacher, too, with the emphasis on “the good relationship with all pupils; the teacher doesn’t show too much compassion for the pupils with special educational needs, the method of schooling is adapted to pupil and the demands are reasonable. The teacher doesn’t show that the presence of a pupil with special educational needs is more demanding, the teacher is able to consult with specialists, pupil’s parents and other competent persons.” The approach of an educator to the integration itself, their effort and activity are therefore probably one of the factors of successful integration of a gifted pupil at primary school. In my research I was interested in how are individual aspects of successfulness of school integration of a pupil with special education needs, an intellectual gifted pupil in particular, evaluated by educators of a primary school. The main **aim** of the research was to find out **what are the conditions of successful integration or causes of failed integration of intellectually gifted pupils at a primary school according to the opinions and experiences of teachers** who educate these children. It regards gifted children integrated by the form of individual integration and group integration.

Other, partial aims of the research were:

1. To find out which variables, according to the opinions and experiences of educators, could have influence on successfulness of integration of intellectually gifted pupils.
2. To find out if the subjective evaluation of successful and failed integration of intellectually gifted pupils **differs** in case of the educators of special classrooms (group integration) and in case of the educators of regular classrooms (individual integration).

Given the objective of the research I was interested in answers to the following questions:

1. What are the most important conditions of successful integration of an intellectually gifted pupil at a primary school according to educators?
2. What are the most important causes of failed integration of an intellectually gifted pupil at a primary school according to educators?
3. Is there a difference in the subjective evaluation of successful or failed integration of intellectually gifted pupils provided by educators of special classrooms and regular classrooms (individual and group integration)?

4. How do the educators perceive integration of an intellectually gifted pupil?:
  - from the perspective of its influence on other pupils in the class and school,
  - from the perspective of cooperation with specialists,
  - from the perspective of strain in their own work.
5. How do the educators evaluate the conditions of integration of an intellectually gifted pupil in their school?

**The research method** was a questionnaire entitled “Questionnaire for a teacher educating a gifted pupil”, which originated by a modification of the “Questionnaire for a teacher who has/had an integrated pupil with a physical, visual or hearing disability in a classroom in a regular primary school” by Balážova (2012). The questionnaire consists of identification questions, closed dichotomous questions, scale and open questions aimed at finding out subjective opinions of educators on the integration of a gifted pupil. The opened questions provide a wider space for a respondent to express their opinion; these answers were interpreted by the method of qualitative analysis, while the statements were classified and consequently placed to categories which are presented in the research outcomes processing.

**The research sample** consisted of 42 respondents – teachers, 5 males and 37 females, **who teach or taught an intellectually gifted pupil in a primary school with special classrooms and in a primary school attended by intellectually gifted, individually integrated and group integrated children.** Pedagogues came from three primary schools, where children are educated in special classrooms for intellectually gifted children (group integration) or by the form of individual integration in regular classrooms; availability sampling was applied. Concerning the age of respondents, the highest proportion of respondents was represented by the teachers under the age of 30 and the sample was relatively well-proportioned regarding the age. The length of practice was usually from 1 to 5 years.

**Table 1:** Conditions of successful individual integration (IIN) of an intellectually gifted pupil (IGP) in a primary school according to educators

Conditions of successful integration of IGP according to educators IIN	IIN	%
Reaching excellent educational outcomes, success	7	16,7
He/she fits into the group, works with the others and according to his/her individual needs	6	14,3
Pupil has an individual education plan and individual approach	5	11,9
Pupil participates in extracurricular activities, represents the school	4	9,5
He/she can work on themselves, develop their giftedness and personality	4	9,5
Pupils know a lot and easily, they are not bored	4	7,1
The presence of the pupil is not at the expense of other pupils	3	7,1
No answer	3	4,8
Creation of conditions for right functioning of the process of education	2	4,8
Appropriate evaluation of the pupil by the educators	2	4,8
Cooperation with special pedagogue and counseling centre	1	2,4
He/she is not bored at lessons, they are given challenging tasks	1	2,4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

Conditions of successful integration of individually integrated intellectually gifted pupils (Tab. 1) concern achievement of excellent educational results, success of a pupil; the focus of teachers is on efficiency of the integrated pupil. In the second place there is the condition of inclusion – incorporation of the integrated pupil in the classroom group.

**Table 2:** Conditions of successful group integration (GIN) of an intellectually gifted pupil (IGP) in a primary school according to educators

<b>CATEGORIES – Conditions of successful integration of IGP according to educators GIN</b>	GIN	TOTAL
Development of their giftedness, their weaker points, too, individuality, personality	8	16,3
Pupil applies the knowledge in practice	5	10,2
Better educational results of the pupil	5	10,2
Expertise of educators – experiences	5	10,2
Ample time for individual education plan	4	8,2
Pupil manages difficult/nonconventional tasks	4	8,2
Creative approach to knowledge, information and success of individual pupils	4	8,2
It is group integration	3	6,1

Pupils are eager for knowledge	3	6,1
His/her presence is not at the expense of the others	3	6,1
Space created for work with pupils according to their abilities	2	4,1
Contentment of the child and parents	2	4,1
Success of the school and the individual	1	2
Pupils do not single out themselves, do not put themselves above the nongifted children	1	2
No answer	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Conditions of successful integration of group integrated intellectually gifted pupils as presented by the educators (Tab. 2) concern the category of the development of giftedness including the weaker points, individuality and personality. In the second place it is the application of the knowledge in practice, but the achievement of excellent educational results and success of the pupil are in the third place. The condition of fitting in the classroom group does not occur, logically (group integration).

**Table 3:** Causes of failed integration of intellectually gifted pupil (IGP) in primary school according to educators INN

<b>CATEGORIES – Causes of failed integration of IGP according to educators INN</b>	<b>IIN</b>
Performance and results do not pertain the giftedness	6
Giftedness is not developed, stagnation	4
Student did not understand his/her giftedness, tiredness, indifference	4
Lack of time for individual education plan during the classes	4
No answer	3
Presence of the gifted pupil is at the expense of other pupils	2
Not all of the conditions of integration are fulfilled	1
Unwillingness of employees – educators	1
Behavior disorders, inability to involve in the group	1
Inappropriate evaluation of the pupil by the educators	1
Teacher does not have space and conditions to deal individually with the gifted pupils	1
Child is bored, concerning knowledge he/she slips down to the level of their classmates	1
Bad cooperation with parents, the pupil and counseling centre	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>

Assessing the causes of failed integration of individually integrated intellectually gifted pupils (Tab. 3) the first place is taken by achievement of results that are not in accordance with the giftedness, it does not develop further.

**Table 4:** Causes of failed integration of intellectually gifted pupil (IGP) in primary school according to educator GIN

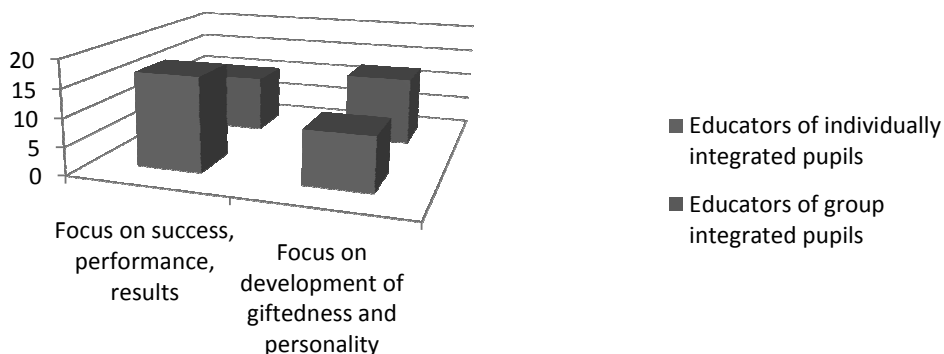
<b>CATEGORIES – Causes of failed integration of IGP according to educators GIN</b>	<b>GIN</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Imbalance between self-evaluation (high, without self-criticism) and real performances	8	<b>38,1</b>
Dependence while working	3	<b>14,3</b>
We do not have such a case, I have no experience with it	3	<b>14,3</b>
Lack of time for individual education plan, inexperience of educators, traditional form of classes	2	<b>9,5</b>
Problems with acceptance and managing high demands	2	<b>9,5</b>
Pupil is hindered by traditional form of classes without individual education plan	1	<b>4,8</b>
Without	1	<b>4,8</b>
I do not know	1	<b>4,8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Assessing the causes of failed integration of group integrated intellectually gifted pupils (Tab. 4) the first place is taken by problematic self-evaluation of the gifted children in comparison to their real performances.

**Table 5:** Subjective evaluation of successful or failed integration of IGP by educators considering the form of integration

<b>Successful/failed integration</b>	<b>Individual integration %</b>	<b>Group integration %</b>
Focus on success, performance, results	16,7	10,2
Focus on development of giftedness and personality	9,5	12,2

**Graph 1:** Subjective evaluation of successful or failed integration by educators considering the form of integration



Taking into consideration the form of integration of intellectually gifted pupils it can be stated (Tab. 5, Graph 1) that educators in classes with individual integration, when evaluating its successfulness, are focused more on the very performance of pupils, which can be its measurement. In classes where only gifted pupils are present (group integration) the educators, when evaluating its successfulness, emphasize the development of personality of the gifted pupil and their giftedness more.

**Table 6:** Conditions of successful integration according to the form of integration of IGP

Conditions of successful integration	IIN	GIN	Average values
a) willingness, acceptance of the gifted pupil by pedagogic and professional staff of the school;	4,9	3	4
b) expertise of educators: sufficiency of knowledge, experience etc.;	3,3	2,1	2,7
c) appropriate evaluation of the pupil by educators;	6	4,6	5,3
d) presence of the gifted pupil in not at the expense of nongifted pupils;	5,6	3,9	4,75
e) suitable/sufficient fulfillment of the elaborated individual education plan;	5,3	5	5,15
f) sufficient time for individual approach;	2,6	3,25	2,9
g) traditional form of classes enabling individual approach;	6,3	6,6	6,45
h) development of/participation in activities according to possibilities and abilities of each pupil;	5,45	5	5,2
i) other.	0	0	0

**Table 7:** Causes of failed integration by the form of integration of IGP, scale answers

Causes of failed integration	IIN	GIN	Average value
a) unwillingness, failure to accept the gifted pupil by pedagogic and nonpedagogic staff of the school;	4,7	2,8	3,75
b) incompetence of educators: lack of knowledge, experience, etc.;	2,6	2,75	2,7
c) inappropriate evaluation of the pupil by educators;	5,95	3,8	4,9
d) presence of the gifted pupil in a class is at the expense of the nongifted pupils;	6	4,75	5,4
e) unsuitable/insufficient fulfillment of the elaborated and approved individual education plan;	5,6	4,75	5,2
f) lack of time for individual approach;	3,45	3,8	3,6
g) traditional form of classes not enabling individual approach;	5,15	4,7	4,9
h) not taking into consideration development of/ participation in activities according to possibilities and abilities of each pupil etc.;	6,5	6,3	6,4
i) other.	0	0	0

The teachers were supposed to express their opinion on the conditions of successful and causes of failed integration of an intellectually gifted pupil at school by the means of scaling (hierarchical range) of their answers from the most important (1) to the least important (8). It was found out (Tab. 6 a 7) that according to both groups of educators (individual and group integration of IGP) successful school integration is based on the expertise of educators in terms of knowledge, experience and sufficient time for individual approach to these pupils. The educators GIN (group integration) expressed that an important role in successful integration is also played by willingness, acceptance of the gifted pupil by pedagogic and professional staff of the school and his/her evaluation. It is likely that pupils who are not accepted positively or as gifted by the educators may be present in the classrooms of group integration, which may be connected to the problematic enrollment of these pupils in such classrooms. Educators perceive this issue as “problems with enrollment of the pupils, with selections that are not realized by the centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention and problems with intervention of school into verified methods and selection of pupils” in group integration and its seriousness was confirmed also in my research.



**Table 8:** Change suggested by educators in education of IGP in contemporary school

Suggested change	TOTAL	
Education of educators in this field, methodology of the gifted and their integration	14	30 %
More and better teaching aids (methodological materials, material facilities)	11	24 %
Quality individual approaches and plans, more time for them	7	15 %
School assistants/special pedagogue in school	7	15 %
Less children in classrooms	2	
To value the work of teachers	2	
Education of the gifted only in a school – a classroom for gifted children – segregation	2	
Interconnection with practice	2	

To the most frequently suggested changes in education of IGP at contemporary school (Tab. 9) belong: provision of education for educators in this field, methodology of the gifted and their integration, provision of more teaching aids (methodological materials, better material facilities), to improve the quality of individual approaches and plans and to provide more time for them, to provide the presence of school assistants or special pedagogues. These changes could be ensured by school in cooperation with specialized institutions, centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention and methodology centers.

**Table 9:** Our school fulfills conditions of successful integration of IGP

Reason	TOTAL	
Education for the gifted takes place in a classroom for the gifted children	19	47,5 %
Adequate expertise of educators and their experience	6	15 %
Less children in classrooms	5	12,5 %
Pupils are efficient, they are skillful	3	
There are individual approaches and plans available	3	
Appropriate conditions for the development and study of the gifted	3	
Material facilities	3	

I was also interested in assessment of integration of intellectually gifted pupils by teachers in their own school; if the school where the gifted pupils are educated fulfills conditions of successful integration. Educators believed that their school fulfills these conditions, they are not in opposition to integration of these children in their school and they can justify its successfulness (Tab. 9). According to the teachers of group integration in their school the successfulness of integration is provided by the fact that they have a specialized classroom for the gifted children, it can actually be

called a special classroom in a regular primary school. In the second place, it is the expertise and experience of the educators that enables success of the integration and a lowered number of children in the classrooms in case of individual integration.

### **Summarization of the research findings**

#### **A) The case of individual integration of intellectually gifted pupils**

- The basic condition of successful individual integration is reaching excellent educational results, the success of the pupil. It means that these should be the measurement of the successfulness of integration of gifted pupils. Paradoxically, it is a situation where integration would be reduced to exceptionality of the child and their giftedness, forgetting about the social and emotional aspect of the development of their personality.
- The focus of the evaluation of these conditions is mainly on the efficiency of the integrated pupil, the second place is taken by the condition of inclusion – incorporation of the integrated pupil into the collective group of the classroom,
- The cause of failed integration of individually integrated intellectually gifted pupils is, according to the educators, accomplishment of such education results that are not in accordance with the pupil's giftedness, it is not being developed. Repeatedly, integration of the gifted is perceived as elitist favoritism and appreciation (by the means of marks).

#### **B) The case of group integration of intellectually gifted pupils**

- The basic condition of successful group integration is the development of pupil's giftedness including their weaker points, individuality and personality; application of the knowledge in practice is in the second place. The condition of incorporation of the pupil into the classroom group does not logically occur in this case. In this case we can talk about forming of all components of child's personality as they are presented in the concept of Creative-Humanistic Education by prof. Zelina in the national project of education "Millennium".
- The cause of failed integration of group integrated intellectually gifted pupils is the problematic self-evaluation of the gifted children in comparison to their actual performances. It was showed that according to the educators the self-evaluation and the performance are not in accordance.

Taking into consideration the form of integration of the intellectually gifted it can be stated that educators in classrooms with individual integration are focused more on the very performance of the pupils, when evaluating its successfulness, which could be its measure. In classrooms where only gifted pupils are present, the educators find the development of the personality of the gifted pupil and their giftedness more important while evaluating the successfulness of integration. However, according to both groups of the educators, successful school integration is founded on the expertise of educators in terms of knowledge, experience as

well as sufficient time for individual approach to these pupils. According to the educators GIN (group integration) an important role is also played by willingness, acceptance of the gifted pupil by pedagogical and professional staff of a school and his/her evaluation (correct/incorrect) during the classes. It is likely that in the classrooms of group integration there can occur pupils who are not accepted positively by the educators or not accepted as the gifted, which may be connected to problematic categorization and enrollment of pupils into these classrooms. Problems with categorization and selection of pupils that are not carried out through the centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention and the problems of interventions of a school into verified methods and selections of pupils in the group integration need to be solved.

- C) According to the educators the presence of gifted pupils in a classroom has an impact on improved performance of other pupils, too; it can motivate them for higher efficiency and diligence.
- D) Cooperation of educators is carried out mainly with special pedagogue, counseling center and school psychologist; however, one third of the educators think that a cooperation with specialists concerning the intellectually gifted pupils doesn't exist.
- E) Only 12.4 % of the educators teaching intellectually gifted pupil feel stress resulting from the work with an intellectually gifted child. Majority of the educators do not feel stress, because the work is perceived as inspiring, teachers enjoy it, they are motivated by the pupil's interest in studying, they work according to an individual education plan, etc.
- F) The educators suggest to allow the gifted pupils to be educated in the field of their giftedness, to provide methodologies on the gifted and their integration, to ensure more teaching aids (methodological material, material facilities), to improve individual approaches and plans and to provide more time for them, as well as provision of school assistants or special pedagogues. These changes could be implemented by the school in cooperation with specialized institutions, mainly centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention, methodology and pedagogy centers.
- G) According to the educators their own school rather fulfills the conditions of successful integration, they can justify its successfulness by the fact that the education of the gifted takes place in a classroom for the gifted, the expertise and experience of educators are at a good level and there is less children in the classrooms.

## 4 Recommendations for practice

Following the outcomes of the research it is possible to propose several concrete recommendations for the education of gifted children.

1. Not to reduce school integration of a gifted child to emphasizing the exceptionality of a child, their giftedness, performance; forgetting about the social and emotional aspect of their personality development. To attempt for a complex development of the personality of a gifted pupil.
2. To verify the level of inclusion – incorporation of the individually integrated pupil into the classroom group.
3. To develop the giftedness of a child in the context of other features of personality, as well as its uniqueness and individuality.
4. To try to correct the self-evaluation of the gifted children in comparison to their actual performances during group work.
5. Positive acceptance of an integrated pupil by his educators; to avoid mistakes of social perception, evaluation and judgment given the talent and giftedness of the pupil.
6. To eliminate problems with the enrollment, selection of pupils that are not implemented through the centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention. To minimize the interventions of school into verified methods and selections of pupils in the group integration of the gifted pupils.
7. To support better performances of other pupils, to motivate them to higher efficiency and diligence.
8. To support all forms of cooperation of the teachers of gifted children, especially with special pedagogue, centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention and school psychologist.
9. To promote the idea among the wider public and educators that the work with gifted pupils is inspiring, a teacher can enjoy it and can be motivated by the interest of the pupil in learning, etc.
10. The educators themselves propose, in order to improve the practice of the education of gifted children, to provide for further education and professional guidance in the field of the giftedness of a child, to provide for methodologies about the gifted and their integration, to provide for more teaching aids, to provide for assistance with elaboration of individual approaches and plans and to provide for more time for their fulfillment. And last but not least to provide for the presence of school assistants or special pedagogues in the education of the gifted. These changes should be provided by the school in cooperation with professional institutions, mainly the centers of pedagogical-psychological counseling and prevention, methodology and pedagogy centers.
11. To maintain lower number of pupils in classrooms where individually integrated pupils are present.

## 5 Conclusion

Education of the gifted pupils, forms, methods and content applied in the education of the gifted are based on their distinctive – special educational needs. Their needs reflect their specific characteristics in the cognitive field, as well as in the social-emotional field. Special education approaches do not pursue only the adequate development of cognitive abilities, intellectual giftedness, but also prevention or elimination of undesirable manifestations, which can display themselves due to insufficient or inappropriate educational approach to the gifted. Our aim should be to identify these needs correctly, to take an individual approach to the gifted pupil taking into consideration their uniqueness, but at the same time to enable their giftedness to be developed in the whole context of their personality and social relations in their life.

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# People with hearing impairment in films

(scientific paper)

Pavel Kučera

**Abstract:** *The topic of deaf people and their world is presented quite often both on TV and in films. When watching movies and TV series featuring deaf people the question arises about the way in which communication of people with hearing impairment is portrayed. What is the motivation of filmmakers when choosing a specific form of communication? There are films featuring the deaf where the hearing audience's beliefs in stereotypes and untrue myths about the deaf tend to be reinforced. This article presents several films and series of Czech and foreign origin which – in one way or another – deal with the topic of hearing impairment.*

**Key words:** *deaf, sign language, lip reading, lay and professional interpreters, subtitles, spoken language of the deaf*

## 1 Introduction

In spite of the progressive improvement of the level of knowledge on the subject of people with hearing impairment, we have to stress that the general population is still subject to prevailing misrepresentations, half-truths or myths about people with this type of impairment. The primary tool providing information to the broadest public is the media. The presentation, attractivity, interesting construction and appealing form of adaptation of the work can determine in a fundamental way the attitude of the general and especially the lay population towards individuals with hearing impairment. Cinematography is dominant – the film being “a work providing an image of reality through specific audiovisual means. While using individual external reality features it creates its own artistic reality with the objective of making an artistic impact.” (team of authors, 1999, p. 288). It is also necessary to point out that when creating

any audiovisual work specific knowledge and a high professional level of the team are necessary. Film production is therefore an extremely intricate process during which cooperation of many individuals exercising different professions is a must. For the movie, each profession is irreplaceable and each influences its final shape. The making of the movie is identical regardless of its length, budget, casting and it is carried out in three phases – that of preproduction, production and postproduction. Bergan (2008) mentions the personal status and points out that “*within the preproduction and production phase, the important people include producers, film directors, screenplay authors and actors who constitute the category ‘above the line’ – usually they enjoy higher status and vastly different salaries. The category ‘below the line’ covers cameramen, composers, editors, costume designers, production directors, stunt men and sound engineers.*” (Bergan, 2008, p. 91). The last phase is that of postproduction. Besides some specific professions coming into play at this stage (such as that of the editor, sound engineer, composer and the special effects team), this is the time for the presentation and distribution of the film (in *ibid.*). It is therefore obvious that the process of creating a movie is a highly complicated one and is subject to a commitment of a substantial number of people. The resulting nature of the film which plays such an important role in forming public opinion and peoples’ standpoint on the given issue is influenced by the way the information is presented and by its quality – in our case by proportionate and correct message related to hearing impairment. In the next part of this paper we shall list false information still prevailing in the general population linked to the communication of individuals with hearing impairment and whose impact can be reinforced through its presentation in films.

One of the mistakes is to perceive the sign language as a universal and understandable communication tool for all deaf people regardless of any other circumstances (for instance geographical and regional determination). Many research inquiries carried out in the 1960’s in the United States by Tetauer (2008) dismantle this myth and support the fact that sign languages are different even if some of their grammatical features are similar. Since – as any language – the sign language continues to evolve and reacts to timely needs of its users, there are differentiations both amongst sign languages in different states and among their varieties within one single country. If we talk about sign language which we consider to be the communication system of the deaf we must talk about a natural language, that is about a language which has not been created artificially but came into being through the natural evolution in the framework of the community of the deaf and their culture. It is therefore obvious that the sign language is a language with its own grammar, vocabulary and community of users and is independent from the spoken language preferred by the majority. In spite of this autonomy the sign language, as a language of a cultural minority, has not been exempt from particular influence by the majority language which is, however, a specific feature of minority languages in general (Macurova, 2008).



Further problems related to the understanding of sign language and, consequently to its adoption by the majority population are closely linked to the perception of the grammar of the communication system. The grammar of sign language has another type of transfer and a structure different from the language of the majority. Thus the preference of that communication system had been primarily suppressed and not supported. We even have evidence of attempts to liquidate it entirely. Bimova and Okrouhliková (2008) state that this trend was present especially prior to 1989 since the communist regime at that time did not support anything that would deviate from the established norm. Sign language, especially because of its visual-motoric existence, was not included in the established norm. For this reason deaf people communicating in sign language only find their way into Czech films after 1989. The recognition of sign language which is now perceived as a natural communication system of the deaf people, comparable to spoken language both structurally and functionally, had been enhanced by linguistic research (launched in the Czech Republic from 1993 onwards) and the initialisation of the reception of the deaf as a language and cultural minority. Subsequently the sign language found its way to the general public and that in turn has been reflected not only by the media and culture but in education and legislation as well (Bimova, Okrouhlikova, 2008).

## 2 Films with the theme of hearing impairment

This part of the paper will mainly deal with foreign and domestic film production featuring people with hearing impairment both in leading and supporting roles. What follows is a structured list which is by no means exhaustive and final. Nevertheless it does offer an updated picture of available films dealing with this subject matter.

There are several dozens of films in world cinematography depicting the issue of hearing impairment or possibly the use of sign language as the main communication tool. In comparison to the Czech production, foreign cinematography offers a much larger and more interesting mix of films with deaf protagonists either in lead or in supporting roles.

- One of the oldest films is called **The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter** (1968). It offers a mosaic of stories featuring a handful of quite distinct characters including first of all the “deaf-mute” John Singer (Alan Arkin) losing his best friend (suffering from a hearing and mental impairment) who has to be placed in an institution.
- Another picture which is also part of the first wave tells the story of a deaf agent (“hearing with his eyes and talking with his gun”) and is called **Deaf Smith and Johnny Ears** (1972).
- **See No Evil, Hear No Evil** (1989) is a comedy about two men with a hearing and sight impairment who happen to be the only witnesses of a murder. In spite of the

fact that the first had not seen anything and the second had not heard anything they become the target of both the police and the mob.

- The best known movie is the American drama **Children of A Lesser God** (1986). The protagonist – a girl named Sarah – is played by Marlee Matlin, a deaf actress. Her excellent performance won her an Oscar for the leading woman role. She also played in countless other films – for instance in the **Bridge to Silence** (1989), **Hear no Evil** (1993) or **In Self Defense** (1999).
- **Piano** (1993) – the three Oscars winning film – features not a deaf or a deafened person but a “mute” woman Ada. The reason for listing this film amongst other works depicting hearing impairment is primarily due to communication by sign language and lip reading.
- One of the sources of humour in the comedy **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (1994) is the communication between two brothers out of whom one is deaf. The humour is therefore based on sign language which the brothers use in public to exchange information assuming others do not understand them.
- **Mr. Holland’s Opus** (1995) is an American musical drama narrating the story of an ambitious composer and teacher of music with an accent on the relationship he entertains with his deaf son trying – as a musical artist that he is – to come to terms with the boy’s deafness.
- The subject of music and hearing impairment is also present in the picture **Copying Beethoven** (2006). It describes the last years of the famous composer, especially the period of his deafness during which he successfully composed – with the help of a young man’s friendship – his famous Ninth Symphony.
- The movie **It’s All Gone Pete Tong** (2004) is the story of a succesful DJ who, in the course of his life, loses his most precious tool – his hearing. In spite of this Pete does not give up and tries to find a way how to continue to play and create music which is all to him.
- **Babel** (2006) is a very good movie indeed. It brings on five seemingly unconnected stories – one of them being that of a deaf student – a girl named Chieko. Following her mother’s death the girl becomes withdrawn in a world of her own silence trying to solve her problem of solitude and need for somebody close (Křestánová, 2007).
- **Goya’s Ghost** (2006) – an American-Spanish cooproduction features the deafened painter Goya and his interpreter. The story is set in 1792 when Goya comes to the Spanish royal court as the royal painter. The Catholic church was then busy strengthening its power through new Inquisition. Following a mock trial and due to a fault by her friend Lorenzo Ines – Goya’s Muse – is sentenced for blasphemy. Many years later the deaf Goya meets Alice, a young prostitute, through whom he learns the entire truth about Ines and father Lorenzo.

- The film **Universal Signs** (2008) features several deaf persons played by deaf actors. According to the authors of the film, however, “...*the picture is not a story about deaf people but a story about being deaf. Not to hear is not considered to be a physical indisposition and the world of the deaf is portrayed as a colourful and culturally rich community, represented by some strong characters (...). It is mostly a black and white film with occasional dream sequences in colour, expressing emotions. The story is told in sign language (ASL) and features occasional signs with written notes for the hearing audience as in old silent films.*” (www.csfd.cz).
- The boy **Who Wanted to Be a Lion** (2010) is a thrilling movie screened at the 2010 Fresh Film Fest. It is the story of a small deaf boy who longs to be somebody else and carries on with his life regardless of possible dangers and pitfalls.
- Actors with hearing impairment also appear in some American series. This is the case of the **Sue Thomas: F. B. Eye** series (2002) featuring Deanne Bray – an actress who doesn’t hear on her right ear and has a loss of 78 dB on her left one. Throughout her entire life she has been trying to use both her remaining hearing and lip reading and this helped her to get the part in the above mentioned series. The film is more of a mystification of the hearing viewers since the agent manages to lip read almost 100 percent of what others say which is entirely unrealistic in real life.
- **Switched at Birth** (2011) is another American series featuring deaf actors. It is a story of two families whose babies, one of them deaf, had been switched 17 years ago. The story unfolds depicting mostly the clash of two entirely different cultures, ways of life and opinions. Slowly – with difficulties but still – there comes understanding and connection of the two worlds – that of the hearing and that of the deaf.
- The drama **Beyond Silence** (1996) even got an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. It describes the life of a teenage girl who is both an interpreter and an intermediary between her deaf parents and the outside world. When the girl accidentally discovers her talent and passion for music and goes away to study, she and her parents drift apart. The film is mostly about complicated decision making and attempts to live one’s own life (www.ceskatelevize.cz).
- The Japanese romance movie **A Scene at the Sea** (1991) is not only the story of a young deaf man who loves surfing but especially about his discipline, his overcoming the handicap and about the relationship with his deaf girl-friend. The film is based on images, actors’ face-play, emotions and the music completing the description of the deafs’ world of silence for the hearing viewers.
- We could also mention yet another example of European cinematography – a Slovak film about sounds – **Silence** (Ticho) (2010). This movie was made by a student of the Bratislava Musical Arts School. Interestingly enough, there is no

spoken word – only a background sound which completes the atmosphere (TKN – 22. 10. 2011).

Czech films portray hearing impairment especially through the loss of hearing of the main protagonists. This is the case of both the biographical film about Bedřich Smetana called **In my life** (Z mého života) (1954) also describing a part of the composer's life and work after he becomes deaf and that of a more recent film called **Guard No. 47** (Hlídač č. 47) (2008). Here, the protagonist loses his hearing only temporarily and later only pretends to be deaf. Czech cinematography includes only a handful of films in which directors have cast deaf people – both actors and nonprofessional actors – in lead or supporting roles.

- **The Past** (Minulost) (1998) is one such an example. This film tells the story of Francis, a deaf young man who is discharged from prison and sets out to find his girl-friend – the only bright thing in his life and the memory of a happier past. The specific nature of the film lies in the fact that it is entirely narrated from the subjective standpoint of the deaf Francis without any spoken word. The authors wanted to capture and bring closer the world of deaf to hearing viewers through an attempt of rousing identical feelings amongst them and the protagonist. Therefore it was necessary to put aside spoken word and replace it by music and sound which complete emotions and intentions of individual scenes for the benefit of the hearing viewers. The advantage of the absence of spoken word is also the accessibility of the film for deaf people themselves ([www.csfd.cz](http://www.csfd.cz)).
- Another picture made by Czech directors featuring a deaf person in a supporting role is **Pupendo** (Pupendo) (2003). Lukas Baborsky is deaf and communicates through sign language with his schoolmates and family. Besides, this is the first Czech movie in history with at least one subtitled copy (intended for screening in movie theaters) provided for people with hearing impairment (Brožík, 2003).
- The deaf further appear in other Czech films such as for instance **Dirty Soul** (Duše jako kaviár) (2004), the series **School in the Limelight** (Škola na Výsluní) (2006) or in the ten minutes long **In my apartment I Live Alone** (Ve svém bytě bydlím sám) (1995). This last black and white sketch is a short film about the inhabitants of one apartment – a blind man and a young deaf couple ([www.csfd.cz](http://www.csfd.cz)).
- There are also two documentaries made in coproduction with Czech Television that can be listed among Czech films about the deaf and with the deaf in lead roles – **Poems for Two Hands** (Verše pro dvě ruce) and **As I Hear** (Jak já to neslyším).
- **Poems for Two Hands** (Verše pro dvě ruce) (2008) portrays the life of prelingual deaf poetess Eliška Vyoraláková from Zlín who – despite her total loss of hearing – has mastered the Czech language to the extent of being able to write and publish poetry in Czech. Her poems were then performed in sign language by students of

the Drama Education for the Deaf at Janáček Academy of Musical Arts in Brno. The documentary depicts especially the proces of creation of sign interpretation of the deaf author's poems ([www.csfd.cz](http://www.csfd.cz)).

- The documentary **As I Hear** (Jak já to neslyším) (2008) introduces seven people with different types and levels of hearing impairment. It is composed of interviews and scenes from their lives. The objective is to educate the hearing public still very much influenced by myths about people with hearing impairment. The documenary also features scenes from the theater performance of students of Janáček Academy of Musical Arts in Brno – the Drama Education for the Deaf (Kratochvílová, 2008).

### 3 Research – introduction and methodology

The primary objective of the research presented below and based on two inquiries – in the Czech republic and in Germany – was to map out what is the communication system in films preferred by people with hearing impairment. The main issue in the research was to find out whether there are parallels in communication of deaf heros in films and in the communication of people with hearing impairment in real world.

The inquiry is based on the analysis of 30 films screened either in movie theaters or broadcast on TV. The material represents a random selection of international films from 1968–2012 with most of them made from the beginning of 1990's until 2012, With approxiamtively two thirds of them being American movies.

The analysis and comparison of partial results will be based both on the research carried out by the author of this paper and on the analysis made in the framework of the theses of Marlies Hochfeld from Hamburg University who focused her work on the issue of communication of deaf people in films. The summing up and implementation of results of both inquiries was demanding not least because the respondents did not know all the films and moreover they repeatedly evoked films directed by people with hearing impairment. The number one task was to register films made by hearing people about people with hearing impairment – that is to map out possible continuation of myths, untruths or mistakes about the communication of people with this impairment.

The main selected research method was the qualitative method of the interview (conducted also with a webcam) with the advantage of direct interaction with the respondents. The interview had the form of a half-structured dialogue based on questions prepared in advance including querees from the following spheres of interest:

- to map out what films the respondents know and which they had seen;
- to find out in each picture what part is played by lip reading;
- to take stock of the respondents' evaluation of the spoken language used by the deaf;

- to find out what is the respondents' perception of interpretation performed by family members;
- to map out the possible presence subtitles in some parts of the film;
- to evaluate whether the information provided is interpreted to a deaf person.

The reason why preference was given to semistructured interview was also the opportunity to make possible corrections during the process and have a chance to possibly explain some querees to respondents in more details.

The selection of respondents was carried out through the method of intentional sample selection, which is probably "*the most wide-spread selection method that we come across in the process of applying the qualitative approach*" (Miovský, 2006, p. 135). Miovský (2006) states that this selection process fosters targeted search of such individuals that not only comply with the criteria set by the researcher but are also willing to take part in the research. The group of respondents was composed solely of the Deaf (with capital D) as a cultural and language minority who enjoy watching movies and series. They were between 25 and 55 years of age and communication was carried out in sign language (the deaf express themselves better through an interview than they would in spoken or written language). The respondents were 57 in total and the ratio of men to women was 3 to 1.

The interviews were carried out during December 2012 and January 2013 and then processed and evaluated. The construction of questions asked was based on the interviewer's own knowledge of the subject and on accessible sources (specialised publications, magazines, encyclopaedia, text-books, internet links and films seen). The venue for interviews was the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University and the Faculty of Education of Palacký University (including the coffee-shop – depending on the respondent and his or her availability). The use of webcam has eliminated distance and thus increased the number of respondents. Questions and answers were registered on a digital camera and the duration of the interview varied between 20 and 60 minutes. In the beginning the respondents were given assurance about the anonymity of the research and information about the research objective and use.

## 4 The results of the research inquiry

In our research we concentrated first on lip reading. The results of the inquiry showed that deaf actors prefer this way of communication by a quantitative value of 62 per cent. This means that for people with hearing impairment lip reading is the most favoured tool of communication in film and on TV screens. The viewer was presented with deaf heros mastering, over fractions of seconds, lip reading to perfection and, with the help of binoculars, even acquiring information from the lips of people sit-

ting on a distant park bench. This almost superhuman ability attributed to the deaf must have stuck in the minds of filmmakers otherwise they would not use it repeatedly – a phenomenon typical for contemporary films as well. Specialised literature (see for instance Strnadová, 1998; Krahulcová, 2002) states, however, that only one third of spoken language can be lip read through visual registration of vocal organs' mobility. The remaining two thirds are not accessible this way therefore it is possible to complete the information based on the context of the dialogue. It is also necessary to note that the quality of lip reading is determined by factors such as optimal field of sight, the distance between communicating partners, adequate lightening, distinct speech or adapted speech tempo. Another important factor is the content of the message, especially the active and passive vocabulary of the person with hearing impairment. These factors however are phenomena that do not play any important role in the researched movies.

All this shows the apparent persistence of myths linked to lip reading and the existence of an intensive preference of this form of communication which is incompatible with the reality. What is the reason of this persistence? The answer might be the fact that lip reading is often part of the film plot. For instance in the American movie **Hatred is Blind** (1950) the hearing hero is using his deaf brother George as a spy. George lip reads clandestinely over the corridor and, what's more, from somebody he only sees from the side. His brother comments as follows: *"George's great, a little foolish, but what a job he does lip reading and from what a distance...!"* In the Canadian TV thriller **Dead Silence** (1997) the deaf hostages can read important information from the FBI negotiator lips which, later, helps them to run away. Another American thriller **His Bodyguard** (1997) portrays a deaf man sitting in a car lip reading from somebody whom he sees from the side making a call in a phone booth. The deaf artist in the German TV film **Death in Your Eyes** (1999) reads the lips of two people sitting nearby plotting a murder.

Another sphere of our interest was the presence of a sign language interpreter in the film. Having analysed the acquired data we can state that 58 percent of films feature hearing individuals as lay interpreters who interpret in different situations for their deaf relatives. Most cases involved family members of deaf protagonists or their partners. Until the end of the 1990's lay interpreters continue to appear quite a lot in films and then they disappear. Two film directors exploit the character of the "natural interpreter" – who is a hearing child of deaf parents. The films **Love without words** (USA 1985) and **Beyond Silence** (Germany 1996) feature deaf actors playing the parts of deaf parents. Love without words was made with the participation of Julianna Fjeld – a deaf producer and actress. Caroline Link, who made Beyond Silence, analyses experiences and characters of deaf people directly in their community. Therefore both films are authentic and describe real problems of interpreters who are family members.

In case of lay interpreters, the situation in films and real life is the same. The hearing family members, neighbours and friends interpret to the deaf in everyday situations, therefore they take on the role of the interpreter without any formal education and without the entitlement to remuneration. Moreover those who come across the deaf when exercising their profession often stand in as communication intermediaries. This is especially the case of social workers and teachers of the deaf. Occasionally some negative aspects of this activity are pointed out – such as direct manipulation of the deaf, bestowing advice or even direct decision-making on behalf of persons with this impairment. Interpreting services for people with hearing impairment should, however, be of good quality. The interpreter must respect the Interpreter's Code of Conduct and at the same time he or she must adapt to each client since interpreting in sign language is a highly individualised matter. To safeguard unequivocal sense of the message and respect for the client should be self-evident. In the fictitious world of film we come across the opinion that use should be made of professional interpreters – this is the case in the British-American comedy **In Love, Spoiled And No Money** (1990) and in the movie **Voices** (USA, 1979) in which Ms. Rose manipulates her deaf sons. Forman's American movie **Goya's Ghosts** (2007) features a professional interpreter but as the results of our research point out, more than half of the respondents do not favor such a presentation. They state that in those days (1st half of the 19th century) there were no professional interpretation services provided. Further reactions show that the interpreter did not respect the Code of Conduct – he did not keep a permanent eye contact, was continually observing things around him, waded into improper nonverbal communication. Also, the lightening was inadequate.

We shall now say a few words about the particular question of the interview aiming at mapping out communication in sign language without translation for hearing viewers. If we look at individual scenes characterised by communication in sign language without interpretation we realise that these are mostly romantic relationships between a hearing person and a deaf person. The main objective is to stress their lack of mutual understanding which sets the romance on and then leads possibly to bitter disappointment and to conflicts. As our analysis shows, 18 percent of respondents do not consider sign language communication as problematic but on the other hand it needs to be said that 63 percent of the interviewees state that – given the stress on the richness of sign language – it would have been beneficial to provide subtitles for such scenes or to interpret them into spoken language for the hearing audience. The benefit of such a screenplay could be a genuine transfer of the world of the deaf, an authentic identification with this problem and an opportunity to show that good understanding without words between people with hearing impairment and those without is possible. This can be illustrated by the American film **Bridge to Silence** (1989) which opens up by a love scene of two young people communicating through sign language. The hearing viewer does not understand their conversation but he is



aware of the honest and warm nature of the relationship between the two protagonists. The genre of melodrama offers more such films, for instance **Love is Never Silent**, **Love without Words**, **Silent Love** (2001). The love scenes of deaf actors are not interpreted in spoken language, nor are there subtitles. The authors' intention is probably to leave the sign language with a kind of aura of a "secret language" serving the purpose of describing a fragile relationship. For instance in the film **Beyond silence**, sign language is described as a "magic language". According to the Hollywood way of thinking sign language should sometimes symbolise the intimacy of a loving relationship. The use of sign language without interpretation in crime series should excite the viewer who does not understand and is curious to know what will follow. These examples show that some filmmakers use sign language without interpretation on purpose especially in order to describe feelings resulting from the denial of direct interaction with one's entourage. Sometimes there is a drive to model the situation of loss of hearing – such as for instance in the film **Beyond Silence** where the viewer has the opportunity of authentically experiencing the unpleasant sensation of a deaf protagonist when his sister plays the clarinet. The respective scenes are shot without sound or with a subdued and unclear sound. Therefore the use of sign language without interpretation shows the authors' intention to stir emotions (for instance alienation, isolation, anxiety, stress).

Another subject that was the theme of our research is the communication of deaf people with their environment through spoken language. The analysed data from research carried out in Germany confirm this form of communication in 48 percent of films under examination. It is necessary to point out, however, that in early films deaf people clearly either do not make any sound or speak without visible verbal deficits with the exception of deaf children who sporadically display typical characteristics of the speech. The real expression of verbal communication of people with hearing impairment was first presented in the movie **Voices** (1979). The results of inquiry carried out in the Czech Republic point out that 91 percent of interviewees do not perceive the use of sign language parallelly to loud speech of the deaf as an interference. In most films under examination almost all deaf protagonists speak with their authentic voice. A deaf person who starts speaking after a long time or for the first time ever often represents a rewarding figure for many film authors who can thus create emotionally strong moments aiming at pushing the audience to tears or stirring the film towards a spectacular happy end. The reasons that make people with hearing impairment decide not to speak are analysed in the film **Voices**. A bright singer by the name of Drew talks his deaf girl friend into at least once demonstrating her voice to him. The girl says: *"I don't sound good."* To which her boy-friend says: *"I don't care how you sound, it's you I care about."* The boy-friend's brother comments on the girl's voice *"Your voice doesn't sound bad, it sounds like the voice of a stranger."* His ironic

words balance out the melodramatic side of this subject. Melodrama prevails for instance in the Italian romance film **To Once Hear Your Laughter** (1993).

During our research the respondents stated that in more than half of the films hearing protagonists both speak and use sign language and they also stressed that the overwhelming majority of hearing characters communicate in signed language of the given country. The reason probably is that most of the actors did not know sign language prior to the shooting of the film and the mastering of signed language is faster than in case of sign language. Therefore filmmakers use signed language since it is a simpler way to create signed communication understandable to hearing viewers without the need to use subtitles which they do not like too much anyway. In reality outsiders are often bewildered by the strange speech the deaf. Deaf actress Emanuelle Laborit says that people with hearing impairment do communicate partly in spoken language but that it creates many misunderstandings. False information and many errors resulting from the use of spoken language are one of the reasons why the deaf strongly refuse spoken language as their main communication tool. The simultaneous use of verbal communication and sign language is incorrect since these are two entirely distinct languages with different grammar, structure and rules. The integration of those languages produces an artificially created signed language which might not always be understandable to the communicating person.

Another theme of our research was the subject of verbal comments of sign language by hearing people in movies. Such a film provides the benefit of bringing in the expression of the deaf person to the hearing audience by means of sign language used by the deaf person whilst a hearing person interprets the message into spoken language (for himself or herself and thus for the hearing audience). After the analysis of the research results it is obvious that 82 percent of the respondents perceived possible positive aspects of such an interaction, yet 17 percent of respondents would prefer the scene to be subtitled. This approach was applied in the film **Silent Lips** (1948) the first film to use sign language. A similar method was used in the well-known American film **Children of a Lesser God** (1986). As stated above, in previous films featuring the issue of hearing impairment, deaf protagonists remained totally silent, with no communication or, on the contrary, spoke perfectly and read lips without problems. Sporadic signs were not translated and remained incomprehensible to the viewer.

The research in the theses by the German author Marlies Hochfeld deals with yet another interesting subject – the issue of interpreting the communication between the hearing and the deaf into sign language. This fact is registered in 38 percent of the films and starting from the 1990's the number of interpreters, especially on TV screens, has been on the rise. For quite a long time, filmmakers did not consider it necessary to translate the communication in sign language to hearing viewers. The change has begun with the growing number of deaf people appearing in films. That process was also linked to increasing self-esteem of deaf heroes in films and theatre

plays. Since then people with hearing impairment do not appear in films only as poor victims but become witnesses, lawyers, hostages, guilty or innocent suspects (in crime genres). Casting someone in an important deaf part naturally implies casting alongside a character who is an interpreter in sign language. Interestingly enough it happens mainly in TV series (60 percent of the total TV production). This is probably linked to increasing TV public preference of series as such and to a certain financial advantage for film producers. Interpreters usually appear in thrillers, crime films and series or series from the courtroom with the interpretation of court proceedings, police interrogations, dialogues with mandators, judges and defense lawyers. When asked whether professional interpreters perform a quality job, 75 percent of respondents stated that it was difficult to assess unequivocally. The reason is first and foremost insufficient quality and quantity of scenes involving professional interpreters and quickly changing takes of the communicating individuals in the scene.

The objective of film directors and authors of series is not to describe the profession of the sign language interpreter yet we can find scenes featuring the interpreter and offering in parallel an authentic picture of the profession. For instance, films point out problems facing the interpreter and resulting from poor organisation of work. Furthermore films include references to the Code of Conduct and to interpreters rights and obligations. That fact is obvious for instance in the film **Prosecutor and Cop** (USA 1992) where deaf people and their interpreter demand their right for an adequate translation of the content. Approximately 70 percent of TV production was made with the cooperation of deaf actors or staff. In spite of the fact that it would be possible to find alternatives to scenes involving an interpreter, his or her presence in the daily life represents a phenomenon so natural that to include an interpreter part in an adequate situation does not represent any problem for filmmakers.

The use of subtitles represents a specific issue. We could suppose that subtitles would appear in films where the deaf protagonist appears more often. Results show, however, quite the contrary – only 8 percent of answers registered in the German research testify that fact. Subtitles in film have been used for instance in the British comedy **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (1994). In spite of the occasional presence of subtitles the film obtained two Oscar nominations. Another such example is the fully subtitled film **Beyond Silence**. The use of subtitles has one big advantage – deaf protagonists can communicate through their own communication means, i. e. through sign language, hearing viewers can simultaneously follow the communication in a foreign language and understand it fully. The director of **Four Weddings and a Funeral** had thus been able to provoke many comical situations. Subtitles are one of the best options to arrive at subtle understanding on all sides and achieve a powerful portrayal of deaf people communication. Thanks to the cooperation of experts, a well researched situation in the community of the Deaf and modern technical means it is possible to create film scenes showing regular communication in

the deaf community. Why, then, are they seldom used? Hochfeld is of the opinion that subtitles are the invention of the 1990's and are therefore still in their evolution phase. They necessitate a certain level of technical equipment which is maybe also the reason why they had not been used so often. Moreover, the production of subtitles is complicated and costly. Our research showed that almost all respondents were happy with films being subtitled and did not really care whether these were hidden or on-screen. The Czech law makes it mandatory for all films on CD-ROM and DVD supports to be provided with subtitles. As stated in Act 231/2001 Coll. and in the Czech Television Act 483/1991 Coll., broadcasting of hidden or on-screen subtitles is listed amongst the fundamental obligations of broadcasting operators. The provider of licensed nation-wide TV broadcasting services (Nova TV and Prima TV – author's note) must provide at least 15 percent of broadcasts with closed or on-screen subtitles whilst – unless the law does not state otherwise – the nationwide TV broadcasting operator is legally (Czech TV Act –author's note) bound to provide at least 70 percent of broadcasted material with closed or on-screen subtitles for people with hearing impairment.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper offers a theoretical and empirical view into a specific and interesting subject of the people with hearing impairment in films. We based ourselves on our own research carried out through interviews and on the analysis of and comparison with the German research – the theses of Marlies Hochfeld from the Hamburg University.

The objective of this paper was twofold – first to provide a basic picture of the researched subject and to offer an overview of accessible foreign and domestic films dealing with the issue of communication of people with hearing impairment and – second, to come up with answers to question related to untruths and myths around sign language. The subjects included for instance polemics related to lip reading of people with hearing impairment in films, discussion about the verbal communication of people with the impairment and mapping out of the role played by lay or professional sign language interpreter. We also dealt with the issue of signed language and with the theme of possible preference of subtitles.

Whilst pointing out the general public's evolving perception of the proces of communication among people with hearing impairment, the results of the research also demonstrate persisting deficiencies and in so doing carve out avenues for further research.

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# Understanding the myth of inclusion preparing teachers for an inclusive setting in Nigeria

(overview essay)

Ewa James Abua

**Abstract:** *The Salamanca Statement 1994 charged respective governments to make education inclusive. Of the several problems besieging inclusive education in Africa, especially in Nigeria, is the misunderstanding and misconception of the subject matter even by certified educators. If inclusion has to work in the school system; it follows therefore that the facilitators of the subject matter must understand the ingredients. The thrust of the paper therefore is on how to train, retrain, orientate, and re-orientate teachers who are the major catalysts in the inclusive agenda to be poised towards achieving the goals of the inclusive education in Nigeria.*

**Key words:** *Inclusion, inclusive education, benefits of inclusion, disabled people*

## 1 Introduction

Education has remained the bed rock of national development. It is liberating force and in our time, a democratizing tool cutting across the barriers of caste, class, creed and circumstances imposed by birth (Olayi, Orim and Ewa 2011). Thus, the Blue print on Education of the handicapped in Nigeria, published in 1981 and revised 1997 states "All children have the right to education, the physical make up, economic status of parents, sex, religion and place of origin notwithstanding". It states further that the educational system should be such that the needs of all children are met including the handicapped.

It should be noted that considering the importance of education in the entire life of a person, educating a handicapped child holds limitless promises and expectations because the acquisition of knowledge through education has come to be recognized as the only opportunity to escape from all obstacles to progress into a life of achievement and self fulfillment.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) is the first Human Right Instrument specific to disabled people. It recognizes inclusion and promises full participation in economic, social, educational, cultural and political life (making the connection: Sight Saver 2009).

According to the document, when world leaders established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there was an omission of one fifth of the world's poorest people, that is the disabled people who consistently face discrimination with 82% living below poverty line. It insists that for a better understanding and the inclusion of this forgotten group, government must deliberately deliver quality education for disabled. It further insists that for a better understanding and the inclusion of this forgotten group, government must deliberately deliver quality education for disabled children. Other developmental organization were urged to ensure that their program understand and embrace inclusion and then include disabled persons alongside their counterparts.

It is in the light of the philosophy of inclusion of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of general education for their overall development that this paper attempt to unravel the myth of inclusion to pave way for understanding of the need for inclusion as a tool for develop persons with disabilities. The focus in on teacher preparation and the representation of inclusive education in Nigeria.

Of the several problems besieging inclusive education in Nigeria, the most prominent is misunderstanding and misconception of the subject matter. This is evidenced in negative attitude of the society towards the special needs children, government reluctance and unwillingness in the implementation of policies affecting persons with disabilities, poor teacher preparation, poor funding, lack of knowledge of the psychology of special needs children, non-availability of supportive staff/caregivers, poor teachers remunerations, non-effective parental involvement as well as lack of empathy on the part of the stakeholders in education.

## **2 Concept of inclusive education**

If inclusive education has to work in the school system, it follows therefore that the facilitations (teachers) of the subject-matter of inclusion must understand the ingredients. It is common knowledge that children who learn together learn to live together. Inclusion emanated from the Salamanca conference of June 1994. In this conference, 92 governments and 25 international organizations met for the purpose of sharing ideas on special needs education and the way forward. The conference agreed on a dynamic new statement on the education of all children with special needs. It adopted a new framework of action with 14 guiding principles that the regular school accommodate the special needs child regard less of his/her ability.



Inclusive education is therefore an education setting where everyone belongs, is accepted and supported by his/her peers and other members of the inclusive community in the course of having his/her education needs met, Pambot 2005). From this definition the special child is made comfortable in the extent that the limitations brought about by disabilities are minimized.

According to Kanu in Obi (2005) inclusive education is the provision of education services for children with special needs in regular schools and classrooms attended by non-disabled children. These schools and classrooms are directly supervised by general education teachers with appropriate special education support and assistance. Inclusive education, simply put, is the education of children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in neighborhood schools (Obi 2003). It is the opportunity given to children with disabilities to participate fully in all educational activities of the school alongside the non-disabled children in a regular school environment. It calls for the provision of support services to general education teachers to enable them support the children. It is based on the philosophy that children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to learn, play, grow, work and live together with the non-disabled children. This promotes natural respect for each other. It calls for the adaptation of the curriculum, the school environment, the teaching resources, the methodology and the recreational activities etc. to meet the special needs of the disabled children.

### **3 Rationale for inclusive education**

It is estimated that about 113 million primary school age children worldwide are not attending school (Unesco 1998). According to Unesco 90% of them live in developing countries. Through efforts are on to meet these needs as a part of the global upsurge for education for all, millions of children are still denied access to education. The problem is further aggravated when it comes to education of children with disabilities who most of the time are denied access to education and opportunity to learning for various reasons like attitudinal, social, cultural, economic, and geographical.

Similarly, Unesco contends that about 20–25% of the school age population require one form of special needs education or the other. Usman in (Umar 2011) observed that about one quarter of each school population in Nigeria needs special educational services to be able to live as frictional members of the society. However, the dearth of specialist teachers coupled with the inability to put such children in our school/society at a disadvantage position. Thus there is the need to change our attitude, our orientation and our direction towards the education of such category of children in order that they can be included in schools.

According to Florin (1988) in Umar (2011) the inclusion of all children in mainstream schools is part of an international human Right Agenda which calls for full

inclusion of persons with disabilities into all aspects of life. Umar further opined that inclusive education is a philosophy of special needs education that is based on certain principles which maintained that all children have the right to learn together and children should not be discriminated because of their disability and also there are no legitimate reasons to separate children for the purpose of learning on the grounds of inequality, disability, gender etc.

Unicef (2004) outlined the benefit of inclusion to inclusive

- Expansion of educational opportunities for boys and girls especially the disabled, vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Promotion of innovative programs that encouraged those with special needs and disabilities to help them enroll, attend and successfully complete their programs in inclusive settings for children with special learning needs and for children with various forms of disabilities.

#### **4 Preparation and recruitment of teachers for inclusive education**

Appropriate preparations of all educational personnel especially teachers stand out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive education.

Good and effective teaching is key to effective learning in an inclusive environment. No doubt good teaching normally emanates from good teachers. It involves skills and ingenuity to reconstruct the curriculum, redesign the environment and change one's behavior, so that the learners would have experiences, resources and support they need to develop their sensitivity, compassion and intelligence. Moreover the teacher is the initiator of the learning process, the facilitator of the learning skills and is also regarded as the single most important factor of fostering the frontiers of knowledge in the inclusive setting (Kohl 1976, Lassa 1988 and Adima 1990 in Umar (2010).

Additionally, all tiers of government especially the Federal Ministry of Education should as a matter of necessity intensify efforts to ensure that as a signatory to this agreement, the implementation of this inclusive policy is adequately pursued.

In view of the above fact, there is therefore an urgent need for highly trained and specialized personnel as enunciated in the section 8; subsection 56(3) of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004). "In order to meet the personnel needs for the education of the handicapped the federal government bursary award for personnel development shall be extended to the education of the handicapped up to the tertiary level."

It is the position of this paper that for the purpose of training and re-training program of teachers to carry out with dedication the work of educating the handicapped children in an inclusive setting, both special and regular teachers involved in the

teaching and education of the handicapped children be given equal opportunity to acquire and develop their skills as related to their teaching and instructional activities.

Also, all institutions of higher learning in Nigeria offering courses in areas of special needs education be adequately funded to enable them procure the much needed technological requirement for their development and research services. This will enable them provide the necessary skills while preparing teachers for the programs.

Hence for teachers to be constantly updating their knowledge and skills in their services delivery, mandatory attendance at workshops, seminars and in-service training should as a matter of necessity be a part of the system.

## **5 Conclusion**

It would be of importance for all stakeholders in this project to understand that inclusion is a planned, systematic and continuous process and not a quick fix solution. The underlying issue therefore is that inclusion need to be understood properly and attended to.

Under ideal conditions there should be legislation backing the policy. All stakeholders should be properly educated on the policy and then machineries for implementation adequately strategized.

It should be understood also that inclusive practices depend on restructured school system that allows for flexible learning environment, with flexible curricula and their communities, thus eventually promoting inclusive society.

## **Recommendations**

The following actions should be taken to re-dress the challenges confronting inclusive education with a view to creating an inclusive society.

- Legislation there is need for a bill to back up the practice of inclusion in Nigeria to be passed by the National Assembly.
- Both federal and state executives should be mandated to as a matter of fact place the responsibility of running the educational sector in the hands of professional educationists. The minister and commissioner(s) for education should be professional educationists.
- There should be a policy implementation committees to oversee the implementation of the policy at all levels, apart from education supervisors and inspectors of schools
- The Federal college of education special Oyo, charged with the responsibility of producing middle class man power (teachers) as well as the universities of Ibadan, Jos, Calabar etc. providing special educational programs should be encouraged through adequate budgetary allocation to practically inculcate the knowledge and attitude of educating persons with special needs emphasized on the theory.

- Special education teachers should be employed, properly remunerated and deployed to schools designated as inclusive education schools/centers.
- There should be adequate awareness created by the Ministries of Education, Information Orientation as well as women and social welfare as the case may be to ensure proper understanding of the policy by all concerned.

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# Ten things every child with autism wishes you knew

NOTBOHM, E., *Desať vecí, ktoré by každé dieťa s autizmom chcelo, aby ste vedeli*. Future Horizons Inc. 2005, translated by Tatiana Komanová in 2013.

**Reviewed by Kateřina Lacková**

The subject of the book is the author's son Bryce, who has autism. By reading between the lines, we can follow his journey from childhood into adulthood. The book is not a practical manual for handling daily problems of children with autism and it is not an ordinary clinical description of the disease either. The author of this publication brings a new view of the understanding of autism, and the readers are presented the concept of ten things, which in the words of the author each child with autism wishes we knew.

At the beginning of the text the author explains the attitudes she reached thanks to her son. Her view of autism is perfectly captured by the assertion that the thing she hates most of all is when someone says, "Oh, your child suffers from autism?" This book is designed precisely for these readers, as well as for parents of children living with autism, experts and laymen.

*Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew* consists of the following chapters:

1. I am a whole child.  
(My autism is part of who I am, not all of who I am...)
2. My senses are out of sync.  
(Significant sounds, smells, tastes... All this affects how I feel...)
3. Distinguish between won't and can't.  
(It isn't that I don't listen to instructions. It's that I can't understand you...)
4. I am a concrete thinker, I interpret language literally.  
(Puns, inferences, metaphors, allusions, and sarcasm are lost on me...)
5. Listen to all the ways I'm trying to communicate.  
(It's hard for me to tell you what I need when I don't know a way to describe my feelings...)

6. Picture this! I am visually orientated.  
(Show me how to do something rather than just telling me...)
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.  
(How can I learn well in an environment where I feel I'm not good enough?...)
8. Help me with social interactions.  
(Teach me how to play with others...)
9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns.  
(Remember that everything I do is a form of communication...)
10. Love me unconditionally.  
(Three words we both need to live by: Patience. Patience. Patience...)

This book spends quite a bit of time discussing the “language of autism”. It makes it very clear that the way we embrace and encourage these children has monumental impact both on their self-esteem and their future success. The author believes that we often use negative language without realising it; the book therefore provides some handy hints on how to detect and remove these negative words from our daily interactions. Each of the chapters presents a number of specific examples, such as how to speak to a child with autism; they also contain examples from real life and questions to ponder. The book is written in a very readable form, which will bring every reader to reflect upon its contents.

I can cordially recommend this publication to anyone interested in this subject.

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# Information For Authors



## Basic information about the JEP

*Journal of Exceptional People (JEP)*, should be based on 2 times a year publishing period in both electronic and traditional – printed form. To guarantee professional standards of the Journal we have applied to the front of special needs teachers, psychologists, therapists and other professionals in the U.S., Finland, Spain, Slovakia, Hungary, China, Russia, Poland and other countries. Above mentioned scientific journal aspires to be registered into the international database of impacted periodicals (Journal Citation Reports).

*Journal of Exceptional People (JEP)* will provide research studies and articles on special education of exceptional people. This area covers individuals with disabilities and, on the other hand, gifted persons. The *Journal* will focus on publishing studies and articles in the field of education, social science (sociology) and psychology, special thematic issues and critical commentaries. The publishing language of the *Journal of Exceptional People* is to be English exclusively.

The periodical is going to be published since the year 2012 by the **Institute of Special – pedagogical Studies at Palacky University in Olomouc**.

## Instructions for authors

Scope of the article is strictly given – mustn't be more than **20 pages** formatted according template (including list of references, images, tables and appendices). The body of the text shall be written in letters of Times New Roman size 11 b. Different styles are undesirable, use the normal template and also please avoid numbering of pages. The final version of the articles ought to be formatted to the paragraphs. The Editorial Board reserves the right to refuse contributions.

The file should be saved under the same name with the surname of first author and sent in a format with the extension doc or docx (MS Word 2007 and upper versions). Before sending a file with the paper it is required to scan for possible infections or viruses. Authors are responsible for content and linguistic aspects of the contributions. Please, do not number pages. Images, graphs and tables should be numbered according to the example (**Figure 1: Preparatory exercise** [Times New Roman 11 b, italics]).

It is highly recommended to spend the necessary time correcting the paper – every mistake will be multiplied. Posted papers unsuitable for printing will not be published! Ensure appropriate division and balance between the various parts of the contribution and aesthetic placement of pictures and diagrams as well as their quality. Terminological correctness and formality are required.

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