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Inclusive education and the risk of sham activities toward students with more severe intellectual disabilities

Edukacja włączająca a ryzyko działań pozorowanych wobec uczniów z głębszą niepełnosprawnością intelektualną

Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyse selected manifestations of a hidden curriculum in relation to the education of students with more severe intellectual disabilities implemented in mainstream schools. The starting point was the category of symbolic violence as coined by Pierre Bourdieu, with particular emphasis on one of its forms, namely the hidden curriculum. Then, the risks of teachers engaging in selected sham activities, their determinants. The strategies used by teachers were also identified, drawing on Erving Goffman's concept of "face." The considerations undertaken are based on the analysis of selected publications, mainly in the field of special pedagogy, showing dilemmas related to inclusive education.

Keywords: sham activities, inclusive education, student with moderate or severe intellectual disability, teacher

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza wybranych przejawów ukrytego programu w odniesieniu do edukacji uczniów z głębszą niepełnosprawnością intelektualną realizowanej w szkole ogólnodostępnej. Jako punkt wyjścia przyjęto kategorię przemocy symbolicznej w ujęciu Pierre'a Bourdieu, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem jednej z jej form, a mianowicie ukrytego programu. Następnie poddano analizie ryzyko podejmowania wybranych działań pozorowanych przez nauczycieli, ich uwarunkowania. Określono również strategie stosowane przez nauczycieli, odwołując się do kategorii „twarzy" w ujęciu Ervinga Goffmana. Podjęte rozważania osadzono m.in. w analizie wybranych publikacji, głównie z zakresu pedagogiki specjalnej, ukazujących dylematy związane z edukacją włączającą.

Słowa kluczowe: działania pozorowane, edukacja włączająca, uczeń z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym, nauczyciel

Introduction

It seems obvious that the school, like any educational institution, is a place where students experience themselves and others, explore and experiment, and form their own identity. In a sense, they build their future by acquiring competencies that should pay off not only "here and now" but also in the future. And yet, school is cited as one of the main sources of feelings of social exclusion.

As Zenon Gajdzica writes, the essence of inclusive school culture is "the transformation of educational conditions (utilizing the resources of the institution and the environments supporting it) so that they serve the development of each student and change with their needs."[1] He emphasizes that the values and other determinants of inclusive school culture are not always fully reflected in school practice, which, according to the author, is the case in Polish mainstream schools. Here, the culture of inclusion is fragmented and closer to the trend of reconstructive inclusion.[2] It's worth explaining, following the author, that the reconstructive inclusion approach applies more specifically to students with disabilities. Deconstructive inclusion, on the other hand, more broadly addresses student diversity, encompassing cultural, religious, gender, economic status, and ability differences. In countries with limited cultural diversity, or where resistance to cultural and religious differences exists, the first approach predominates. The second approach, on the other hand, is developing more intensively in countries with greater diversity in these respects.[3] Regardless of the beliefs and experiences of researchers, teachers and specialists, the issue of inclusive education requires and will continue to require constant reflection on the effectiveness and optimization of school activities for children/students. Do these actions support their development, or on the contrary, are they merely superficial and serve to mask ineffective or inept actions? The literature on the subject emphasizes that students with intellectual disabilities constitute the group that raises the greatest dilemmas, but also challenges from the perspective of mainstream schools, including teachers themselves.[4]

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[1] Z. Gajdzica, *Uczeń z lekką niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w szkole ogólnodostępnej. Nauczyciele o (nie)zmienianej sytuacji w kontekście kultury szkoły inkluzyjnej*, Warszawa 2022, p. 45.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 46.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 30.

[4] See, e.g.: I. Konieczna, K. Smolińska, *Dokąd zmierza edukacja? Kontekst zmian systemu kształcenia uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną*, "Szkoła Specjalna" 2022, No. 83(5), pp. 345–358; T. Żółkowska, T. Parafiniuk, *Wsparcie uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w edukacji włączającej – wybrane obszary analizy z perspektywy koncepcji Roberta Schalocka*, "Roczniki Pedagogiczne" 2023, No. 15(3), pp. 33–34.

Symbolic violence in the educational environment

School is a place where symbolic violence operates, a discreet form of manipulation, a hidden and veiled form of domination.[5] Pierre Bourdieu explains this fact as the "arbitrary imposition of cultural arbitrariness."[6] This means, among other things, imposing a specific type of knowledge, attitudes and values, the adoption of which is linked to advancement or success achieved in school. Therefore, this is the so-called legitimate culture, the culture of the upper class, which is pursued in school through socialization. In other words, education directed at members of dominated classes is a process of cultural colonization.[7] Pierre Bourdieu believes that domination operates only in its so-called elementary form, meaning that between individuals it cannot be open, but rather hidden "under the guise of enchanted relationships."[8] Domination will only be recognized if it is unrecognized. Relations of domination "can only be established, maintained, or renewed at the cost of strategies that must transform, reshape, in short – *euphemize*, otherwise they risk annihilation by the exposure of their truth."[9] The culture in schools, previously developed by society, is instilled, transmitted, and imposed on others.[10] As Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron note, one of the most important goals of teachers' activities is to create homogenized habituses, that is, to speak with the voice of an arbitrary culture, which they often do unconsciously, having been shaped by such a culture. Through the mechanism of selection, schools maintain the pre-existing order, also as differences between students equipped with unequal amounts of cultural capital, conducting various acts of selection.[11] In this way, they sustain pre-existing social differences.[12] Mariola Chomczyńska-Rubacha and Krzysztof Rubacha emphasize that the structure of subordination can generate symbolic violence alongside physical, psychological, and structural violence. This manifests itself, for example, in the devaluation of the cultural foundations of a student's social identity, or in imposing interpretations of school texts or historical and social events. They draw attention to various forms of symbolic violence in the educational environment, where, alongside those already signalled, one must highlight the hidden curriculum[13] which, as Martyna Pryszmont-Ciesielska writes, is a tool that shapes the habitus of

[5] A. Suchocka, *Przemoc symboliczna jako element ukrytego programu kształcenia polskiej szkoły*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Marynarki Wojennej" 2011, No. 4(187), p. 295.

[6] After: P. Mikiewicz, *Socjologia edukacji. Teorie, koncepcje, pojęcia*, Warszawa 2016, p. 166.

[7] *Ibidem*, pp. 165–167.

[8] P. Bourdieu, *Zmysł praktyczny*, Kraków 2008, p. 171.

[9] *Ibidem*.

[10] M. Falkiewicz-Szult, *Przemoc symboliczna w przedszkolu*, Kraków 2007, p. 20.

[11] R. Pęczkowski, *Funkcjonowanie klas łączonych w polskim systemie edukacji*, Rzeszów 2010, p. 26.

[12] P. Bourdieu, *Rozum praktyczny. O teorii działania*, Kraków 2009, p. 30.

[13] M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, K. Rubacha, *Przestrzeń aksjologiczna szkoły I. Konstrukt teoretyczny*, "Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych. Educational Studies Review" 2016, No. 23(2), p. 154.

educational participants and an agent in the reproduction of specific cultural and social capital.[14]

The issue of symbolic violence seems particularly important for special education. The fundamental reason, as Dorota Podgórska-Jachnik points out, is the target of symbolic violence itself, that is, the person susceptible to exclusion, which stems from, for example, lower social competences, including communication skills. Public discourse, which acquires a sense of importance and legitimacy, can spill over into the intrapersonal dimension.[15] A common phenomenon observed among people with disabilities, especially those with incomplete and uncertain identities, is self-marginalization and self-exclusion. These processes undermine the personal resources necessary to unlock the potential for self-fulfilment.[16] Unfortunately, the education system, through its inherent structure, organization, and functioning, reinforces unequal opportunities for individuals, including those with disabilities, as Jolanta Rzeźnicka-Krupa points out.[17]

The hidden curriculum in education

In the field of pedagogical research, the issue of the hidden curriculum is most frequently addressed in the context of schools, but also in other educational institutions. As it turns out, explaining the concept of the hidden curriculum is not a simple task. Explaining the essence of the hidden curriculum is achieved by juxtaposing it with the explicit curriculum. Such an approach, while obvious, does not – contrary to appearances – clearly resolve the nature of this mutual opposition. M. Pryszmont-Ciesielska notes that separating these terms would make them impossible to understand, as their relationship indicates both opposition and coexistence and complementarity. They complement each other, creating an inseparable whole.[18]

From a sociological perspective, the hidden curriculum in education is distinct from the formal, explicit curriculum defined by the arrangement of subjects and topics. The hidden curriculum is expressed in the way cultural values and attitudes are transmitted through the structure of teaching and school organization.[19] Referring to Philip W. Jackson's book *Life in Classrooms* (1968), the author distinguishes

[14] M. Pryszmont-Ciesielska, *Ukryty program edukacji akademickiej*, Wrocław 2010, p. 37.

[15] D. Podgórska-Jachnik, *Deprecjacja osób z niepełnosprawnością w dyskursie publicznym za pośrednictwem mediów* [in:] *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w rezerwacie przestrzeni publicznej*, ed. Z. Gajdzica, Kraków 2013, pp. 75–76.

[16] L. Cierpiałowska, after: D. Podgórska-Jachnik, *Deprecjacja osób z niepełnosprawnością*…, p. 76.

[17] J. Rzeźnicka-Krupa, *Edukacja i niepełnosprawność – wyrównywanie szans czy reprodukcja społecznych nierówności*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2019, No. 33, p. 57.

[18] M. Pryszmont-Ciesielska, *Ukryty program*…, p. 14.

[19] *Słownik Socjologii i Nauk Społecznych*, ed. G. Marshall, scientific ed. of the Polish edition M. Tabin, Warszawa 2008, p. 409.

three aspects of the hidden curriculum: crowds, praise, and power. A student in a classroom is one of many, someone from the crowd, and is thus subjected to limitations and self-denial, constant evaluation and competition, while the teacher is the students' primary superior.[20] Piotr Mikiewicz, emphasizing one of the effects of the school experience – namely, adaptation to power, or more specifically, to being subordinated – references Erving Goffman's concept of total institutions. The teacher exercises control over students, who have significantly limited freedom in relation to him or her, and compulsory schooling itself creates coercion.[21] In school we often find "a conflict of interests and expectations of students, parents, teachers, society, a specific test of strength of individual educational entities, as well as strategies for adapting to the hidden dimensions of school life."[22]

Roland Meighan identifies the dimensions of the hidden curriculum, which include: the school space and its surroundings, the organization of activities, the formal curriculum, school organization, teachers' expectations, language, as well as assessment, testing, and examination.[23] The hidden curriculum in schools consists of the three unofficial R's: rules, routines, and regulations.[24] Crowding, waiting, routine, and teacher power are just some of the elements of everyday school life.[25]

The hidden curriculum in school – some reflections in the context of students with more severe intellectual disabilities

It seems that the phenomenon of the hidden curriculum in the context of students with more severe intellectual disabilities is strongly present in the implementation of broadly defined inclusive education. Researchers present the hidden curriculum through the lens of apparent/sham activities. Grażyna Dryżałowska[26] writes about these sham activities and their apparent effects in educational integration. In her opinion, there is still a clear division between students with and without disabilities, and the only change has been the renaming of the latter group as students with special needs. The focus on providing specialized support has become a sine qua non for enabling education in mainstream education. There has been a lack of greater focus

[20] *Ibidem*.

[21] P. Mikiewicz, *Socjologia edukacji*…, p. 222.

[22] M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, K. Rubacha, *Przestrzeń aksjologiczna*…, p. 153.

[23] After: P. Mikiewicz, *Socjologia edukacji*…, p. 227. See: A. Przybysz, *Ukryty program – zakres treści i przegląd wybranych badań empirycznych*, "Przegląd Pedagogiczny" 2011, No. 1, pp. 183–184.

[24] P.W. Jackson, after: A. Korzeniecka-Bondar, *Lepsze to, niż zamulanie w domu? Krótka rzecz o wyćwiczeniu ucznia w kulturze pozoru* [in:] *Sprawcy i/lub ofiary działań pozornych w edukacji szkolnej*, eds. M. Dudzikowa, K. Knasiecka-Falbierska, Kraków 2013, p. 331.

[25] M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, K. Rubacha, *Przestrzeń aksjologiczna*…, p. 155.

[26] G. Dryżałowska, *Integracja edukacyjna z innej perspektywy*, "Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej" 2017, No. 16, p. 40.

on transforming negative attitudes into attitudes of acceptance of difference. The dominance of institutional integration has, in some ways, contributed to the transition of students with disabilities into special education. This sham situation is created by the existence of segregation in integrated education, where the type and degree of disability determines the acceptance of a student with a disability for education with students without disabilities. Students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities are the most frequently identified group predisposed to education in special schools. The sham activities of integrated education are evidenced not only by changes in schools, especially at higher levels, but also by complete abandonment of further education. Strategies employed by headmasters and teachers to deter disabled students and their parents from being educated alongside their able-bodied peers, and making their attendance dependent on fulfilling school demands, provide further proof of sham integration. Katarzyna Parys discusses the sham integration of special education in Poland.[27] It is difficult not to agree with the author that the possibility of choosing a form of education – though guaranteed by legislative provisions – proves to be sham, as it is frequently unavailable within the local community.[28]

Inclusive education often becomes its own hostage, which means its rightful and valuable ideas disappear in the real world of schools, or are distorted and take on the form of segregationist, exclusionary, and marginalizing practices. The reality we observe in mainstream schools distorts the essence, or rather the very idea of inclusive education. It assumes a somewhat grotesque vision under the slogan of "a school for everyone," filled with the paradox of artificial or inept struggles of teachers facing the ministerial obligation to adapt educational requirements. The hidden curriculum of schools affects not only education but also the individuals participating in it. "Pretending to follow the script imposed by the ministry, they manoeuvre between the command and fictitious compliance, naturally with an eye to profit."[29]

Listening to public debates and discourses in various forums, both official and unofficial, one gets the impression that a critical approach to inclusive education is sometimes perceived as a pedagogical faux pas. It is a kind of anxiety expressed through fears that it is "inappropriate" to speak ill of this form of education. Otherwise, one might risk being accused of being intolerant, backwards or uneducated. This is especially true since the issue of inclusion reaches us from everywhere, through scientific and popular science publications, courses and training sessions organized by teacher training centres, and the mass media (which often reveal societal indifference towards people with disabilities). While inclusive education

[27] *Ibidem*, pp. 41–46.

[28] K. Parys, *Zjawisko pozoru w systemie kształcenia uczniów niepełnosprawnych*, "Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej" 2014, No. 4, p. 34.

[29] M. Groenwald, *Standardy moralne czy standardy wymagań? O moralnych aspektach pozoru w szkole* [in:] *Sprawcy i/lub ofiary działań pozornych w edukacji szkolnej*, eds. M. Dudzikowa, K. Knasiecka-Falbierska, Kraków 2013, p. 143.

remains only in the sphere of theoretical analyses, and therefore unsupported by personal experience, it is easier to support the arguments in its favour. When faced with the inability to effectively educate a student with an intellectual disability in a mainstream classroom, usually at higher educational stages, arguments "against" are no longer hard to find. Teachers find themselves in various interactive situations almost every day. They interact with their students daily or, to use Goffman's words,[30] adhere to their roles. Other participants in these encounters and interactions include fellow teachers and students' parents. Role adherence is regulated by "face." "The concept of *face* can be defined as the positive social value attributed to a person in a given encounter situation when others assume that this person adheres to a specific role."[31] Following Goffman's thought, it can be assumed that teachers save face if the role they perform creates a coherent image of themselves in a given situation and is confirmed by the participants of the meeting, i.e., in this case, the students during educational activities. A role is generally legitimate and institutionalized. A meeting participant with specific attributes can expect that others present will cooperate in playing their role, viewing it as both their moral duty and their right. Referring to selected analyses of social interactions by Goffman,[32] I would make a certain comparison. As the author writes, "a given person will have two points of view – a defensive attitude towards preserving one's own face and a protective attitude towards preserving the face of others. Some practices are primarily defensive, others primarily protective, although both attitudes can usually be expected simultaneously. In trying to protect the face of others, a person must choose a course that does not jeopardize their own, while in defending their own face, they must consider the possibility of depriving someone else of face."[33] Therefore, a teacher who, for various reasons, struggles with the education of a student with an intellectual disability, saves face by employing certain strategies, including rituals, to deprive the student of face (examples are provided later in the text). Sławomira Sadowska explains the distance of mainstream school teachers from inclusive education precisely by attempting to avoid guilt and humiliation stemming from fears of failing to meet the competence and effectiveness requirements of new tasks.[34]

From the perspective of the teaching process, it can be concluded that while pedagogical optimism allows us to believe that these struggles will trigger actions that will sooner or later create sensible and effective educational solutions, previous experiences are still closer to the tendency to lower or simulate educational requirements. During

[30] See E. Goffman, *Rytuał interakcyjny*, Warszawa 2012, p. 5.

[31] *Ibidem*.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 14.

[33] *Ibidem*.

[34] S. Sadowska, *Kształcenie integracyjne dzieci z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – krytyczny bilans pierwszych strukturalnych zmian w systemie edukacji*, "Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych. Educational Studies Review" 2016, No. 2(23), p. 128.

lessons, this tendency manifests itself in many ways, which should be interpreted as: minimizing teacher-student and teacher-student-students interactions, unjustified student involvement in other activities or tasks (e.g., math classes de facto turn into art classes), and limiting the teacher's role solely to caring for the student with a disability, thus assigning him or her a limited role in the classroom and in the school environment, including peer group. Regardless of whether this situation stems from the teacher's lack of competence in working with a student with a disability, or from an unfortunately guided educational path, the student remains trapped in a closed reality. He or she operates within a context with clearly defined boundaries that have nothing to do with pedagogical guidelines for safe, conducive learning environments. This raises the question of the category of the Other's developmental potential. Quite often, the perception of a "student with a statement of special educational needs," his or her cognitive and broader psychosocial functioning is dominated by a negative diagnosis, which is interpreted as an inevitable failure from the very start. A positive diagnosis, on the other hand, is a kind of educational mirage. As an aside, it's worth considering the extent to which we use our students' strengths in pursuing educational and pedagogical goals in Polish schools. The position of a student with a more severe intellectual disability in a mainstream classroom can be compared to a mirage.

The phenomenon of the emergence of a false image of a distant subject fits into the context of the apparent education of a student with a statement of educational needs, i.e., "difficult" or "problematic." The presence of the Other is reduced to a physical presence, not a mental, intellectual, or even emotional one: "you are among us, but you are not with us." Failure, overlooking, or even worse, downplaying the need to meet a student's educational needs, often irreversibly impedes his or her cognitive development. A teacher's disregard for the educational potential of any student, particularly those with more severe intellectual disabilities, leads directly to stigmatization. Such a student starts to be perceived through the prism of a problem, complicated, burdensome, or impossible to solve. The teacher's strategy is to avoid, even justify the avoidance of meaningful education for the adolescent. Rationalization of such action manifests itself in pointing out, for example, a sense of lack of competence to work with a student with a disability, too little time during a lesson or teaching unit, a different core curriculum [as K. Parys writes, one teacher in a class group and two different core curricula is a situation that in practice isolates a student with this disability from the possibility of real education[35]] and the difficulties associated with its implementation, large class sizes, and the varying abilities within the group of able-bodied students themselves. A student isolated from rational educational activities inevitably experiences confusion, loneliness, a sense of being inferior, and not fitting into the social group in which they normally participate. Furthermore, the teacher's limited, or even infantilized,

[35] K. Parys, *Zjawisko pozoru*…, p. 37.

approach towards a student with a more severe intellectual disability again impacts the specific perception of the student by their peers.

Dryżałowska formulated the key questions in the context of inclusive education, which also give meaning to undertaking further multifaceted actions (in the areas of scientific research, legislation, implementation, and practice) in the field of education and upbringing of students with disabilities: "First, whether inclusive education is a form of education for all students with disabilities, and second, whether the special education pathway maintained within the Polish integrative education system is truly inclusive, or rather exclusive – to a greater extent than was anticipated before the popularization of integrative forms of education?"[36] Zdzisława Janiszewska-Nieścioruk and Marzenna Zaorska drew attention to the totalization of solutions in the education of students with disabilities. Thus, integrated classes established in the 1990s became an alternative to monothematic segregated education, which was discredited and, in the opinion of parents, began to be perceived as isolating and stigmatizing their child. Integrative forms, despite their rightful aspirations, were reduced to rather homogenous solutions that – practically alongside special education – constituted the only educational offer for students with disabilities. In subsequent years, a totalization of the pro-inclusive approach was observed. Inclusive education stands in opposition not only to segregated education but also to integrated education, despite its clear weaknesses, especially in the context of people with intellectual disabilities, taking the form of sham activities.[37]

The perception of individuals with more severe intellectual disabilities in the role of a student, particularly regarding their future prospects, takes on a specific suspension phase. Its characteristic feature is a survival strategy, which is more often observed in mainstream schools, but this is not the rule. Teachers, especially at higher levels of education, unable to meet their educational obligations towards this student (for various reasons, not always within their control), initiate strategic actions. Using military terminology,[38] the teacher, assuming and anticipating a losing battle, tries to survive and suffer as few losses as possible. This also refers to Goffman's approach to saving face. Strategies vary. Focus can be placed solely on promising students, while those who are not promising are often left to their own devices, believing they are, after all, victims of the system. Another way of functioning on the battlefield is to aim for simple goals, setting demands that the student will certainly meet, but which essentially contribute nothing to their development. These will therefore be activities

[36] G. Dryżałowska, *Wyobcowani w integracji a edukacja włączająca*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2018, No. 29, p. 29.

[37] Z. Janiszewska-Nieścioruk, M. Zaorska, *Prowłączające zmiany w systemie polskiej edukacji – nowe możliwości, ograniczenia i wyzwania*, "Interdyscyplinarne Konteksty Pedagogiki Specjalnej" 2014, No. 4, pp. 15–19.

[38] The rationale for and application of the tools constitute a military metaphor in the description of school culture Maria Dudzikowa in: *Wstępnie o metaforze (także militarnej)* [in:] *Twierdza. Szkoła w metaforze militarnej. Co w zamian?*, eds. M. Dudzikowa, S. Jaskulska, Warszawa 2016.

aimed solely at filling class time. A common practice is to exclude a "problematic" student from certain educational activities and provide them with activities of a different nature during this time, most often rehabilitative/revalidating or therapeutic (removing the weak individual from the battlefield). The rationale behind this is that since the student will benefit little or nothing from the lesson, it would be better for them to work with a specialist during this time. Sometimes, the student is "taken care of" by a teacher at an after-school club or a school counsellor. These strategies for "coping" with a student who undoubtedly requires significant involvement on the part of the teacher also show forms of excluding the student from educational activities, and therefore from the peer and school community.

Returning to the issue of perceiving the role of a student with a more severe intellectual disability, which I have called the suspension phase, I would like to offer yet another perspective that explains it. Basically, every student, both able-bodied and with various special educational needs, progressing through subsequent educational stages and standing on the threshold of the next one, is viewed through the prism of their competencies, which will allow them to move on and meet specific requirements. For this first group, the goals and the path to achieving them are very clear. What does this mean? Teachers, parents, and ultimately the non-disabled students themselves know, or at least can assume with a high degree of probability, what their educational path will be. They know at what age they will complete a given stage of education and which school (such as a general secondary school, technical school, or vocational school) they will attend next, based on their previous performance, including grades on the school certificate and external exam results. Contrary to appearances, the situation of a student with a more severe intellectual disability is not as clear-cut as it may seem. Firstly, the chronological age and the actual time of completing a given educational stage can vary significantly within this group. This is dictated by, as I mentioned, the postponement of compulsory schooling and the extension of educational stages. Secondly, the frequent phenomenon of changing schools is observed, most often from inclusive to special education, which also exemplifies uncertainty and errors in choosing educational options. The repeated adaptation process, characterized by constant uncertainty regarding its outcome, combined with the effort to make up for missed opportunities prolongs the state of suspension for both the student and his/her parents. Thirdly, educational goals and procedures for achieving them formulated for students with more severe intellectual disabilities are much more dynamic than for students without disabilities (this involves, for example, the need to extend the implementation time,[39] change the method, or implement additional methods).

[39] The results of Piotr Plichta's research [*Occupational burdens of special educators working with intellectually disabled students*, "Medycyna Pracy" 2014, No. 65(2), p. 245] on the subjective measurement of the professional burdens of special educators working with students with intellectual disabilities show that the feeling of waiting too long for the effects of one's own actions, understood as positive changes in the functioning of students with intellectual disabilities, is one of the stressors that ranks high in the ranking of burdens of the surveyed teachers.

Teachers working with students without disabilities can generally easily determine what educational content they will cover in a given semester, or at least in a given year. Even from a single-lesson perspective, the process for achieving the intended outcomes can be quite predictable. They quickly begin to understand the capabilities of individual students, predicting their semester-long, or even year-long achievements with a high degree of probability.

Reflections on the education of students with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms are filled with concerns about its effectiveness and efficiency. These concerns grow with descriptions of school practices observed in typical classrooms, where teachers operate under the influence of directives contained in ministerial regulations. Maria Groenwald presents an outline of such practices, which fit students into an "educational uniform." Thus, teachers teach according to the curriculum and the corresponding textbook, most often exam-oriented, and according to the methodological guide. They do not address topics stemming from students' interests, nor do they implement their own teaching innovations because they lack the time. They attribute this to the overloaded curriculum they must complete.[40] This pessimistic view of educational illusion, which distorts its essence, inevitably forces questions about the real time available to students with intellectual disabilities.

Conclusion

The reflections presented in this article are rooted in long-standing considerations in pedagogical literature. They also stem from personal reflections and recurring events that are fragments of educational reality. Despite recent changes in the organization of education and support for students with special developmental and educational needs in Poland, aimed at optimizing the effectiveness of these processes, it seems that the discussion on these areas will continue. Each socio-cultural change inevitably shapes the discussion. The continuation of research on inclusive education for students with more severe intellectual disabilities and on the entities responsible for this process should aim to answer the questions: what future perspective are we envisioning for students with this disability, whether we are considering it at all, and to what extent is it consistent with the perspective they themselves create?

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