



INCLUSION IN EDUCATION – THE CZECH CASE

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„JOINT“ EDUCATION – AS A PART OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF EDUCATION

- **From the historical "long wave":**
 - The need to strengthen social ties („modern“ national states and the need for cohesion) ;
 - Prevention of "negative externalities" (reduction of additional costs);
 - *Development of educational systems towards the values of equality and equity to lead to justice.*
- In progress for over 100 years: "education for all": integration of new categories of people originally „ the uneducable ones" with others (lower social groups, women, "handicapped"), Maurin 2007
- The concept of "discrimination" (Binet) – (1) separate education towards special education sector (high quality in Czech Rep.) and after World War II (2) "positive discrimination" of extra care within the mainstream (Bernstein, Labov, Plaisance)
- Over the past 25 years, the trend of maximum inclusion of all (disabled, socio-culturally disadvantaged and ethnic minorities) - on an individual principle!
- In the Czech Republic exaggeratedly stressed the connection with the D.H. Verdict , but at a closer look we see roughly the same pressures in other countries

IQ'ISM VS. SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY OF THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON COGNITIVE (MENTAL) DEVELOPMENT

- The exemplar category – mental disabled
- The misuse of the Gaussian function of constant, internal prerequisites of school performance: x
- It was known already at the beginning of testing (Binet 1905) that traditional intelligence scales (tests) measure and quantify the current state, which gives only poor information about the capabilities of the child (so-called cross-sectional diagnostics).
- Since the turn of the 20's and 30's (Vygotskij, Lurija and field research in Central Asia), later in the 1960s (Oléron and Piaget's testing in Maghreb), in the 1970s (Cole, Scribner, Lave in Liberia) it has been clear that assessing child's potential is insufficient without a qualitative diagnosis of an individual's development potential in relation to the socio-cultural conditions of his/her life.
- Experiments have shown that a combination of traditional diagnostics and "training" (instructions revealing the logic of tasks) helps to a large part of the originally „disabled" – however, the mistake is not in the tool itself but in the overall approach.



CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL APPROACH: DYNAMIC DIAGNOSTICS

- Qualitative assessment including the ability to use instruction, i.e. support of a teacher
- Current performance is not decisive - the potential for progress when supported (in the zone of proximal development) is the key factor
- The issue of assessing all socio-culturally disadvantaged properly and of increasing the inclusion of the education system therefore lies:
 - 1. in the availability of valid, standardized tools of diagnostics of intellectual and adaptive abilities, with emphasis on dynamic diagnostics
 - 2. in the quality of "assistance", i.e. ensuring training in the area of missing linguistic, communicative, operational etc. prerequisites (quality of the pre-school preparation, equalizing classes, curriculum modifications)



INCLUSION IS DESIRABLE - BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- According to P. Farrell (2002), real inclusion takes place in four phases:
- **Integration**, i.e. the simple physical **presence** of pupils with special educational needs **in regular schools; it is the absence of exclusion;**
- **Acceptance** means ensuring that these pupils will be accepted by teachers, their classmates and their parents as full-fledged and active members of the school community;
- **Participation** (opportunities) means creating conditions for the active participation of children with SEN in all school activities
- **Achievement**, or creating conditions for these children to reach tangible learning outcomes.



CZECH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: FROM THE TRADITIONALLY EGALITARIAN CULTURE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL TO THE SELECTIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

- Inter-war period: struggle for a cohesive school and a laboratory of pedagogical innovations („internal differentiation“, not streaming)
- End of the 1980s: Nearly 100% of children in kindergartens, together up to 15 years, three-stream secondary schools (39% of an age cohort) and highly selective universities
- Rather sophisticated and high-quality sector of special education (10% age cohort) x dark side: its highly segregating character - isolation from the "normal" society
- Policies of positive discrimination minimal in mainstream education
- Rooted opinion: **success in school is more a matter of (inborn) ability than effort**, social, cultural and pedagogical conditions



90S - EARLY SELECTION

- Reaction to Comprehensive/Uniform School: a multi-stream education system with early selection
- In principle only kindergartens and 1st stage (primary) of 9 years elementary school - joint education (more and more even pupils with SEN)
- First selection at the age of 11 (more than 20% of the population of the corresponding grade in large cities enroll in multi-year „elite“ lower secondary schools) + about 1,5% in private schools + alternative or "parental", community schools
- "Normal" elementary school in many places becomes a "residual school" – with the best performing pupils teachers leave it
- According to the PISA survey, the gap in educational outcomes is growing: : a) between regions, b) between schools (here significantly more than among pupils within schools)



90S: SCHOOL MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

- Individualisation and psychology (potential, everyone has SEN, although each a different one)
- "Esencialist" approach - IQ'ism (each more or less deserves his/her inclusion in the educational structure, therefore the need of a differentiated selective system)
- Consequence: underestimation of the "genetic" influence of social, cultural and pedagogical conditions on psychol. prerequisites for school success
- Summary: Three periods of dealing with inequality in education
 - 1950 - 1980 administrative policy measures
 - 1990 - integration period (right of access)
 - 2015 - period of the second and third phase of inclusive policy (adaptation to SEN)



THE CZECH WAY TO INCLUSION - TARGET CATEGORIES

- Individuals / institutions (newly also kindergartens, clubs, children homes etc.)
- Groups (special extension - handicapped + gifted)
- Geographic areas (zones)
- Until 2015, the Czech Republic preferred a group criterion (Roma, minorities, Learning and Behavior Disorders, etc.)
- 2015: combinations of (extended) groups + individual specific needs (individual examination in school counseling facilities) + type of school (regular or special one)
- Geographical criterion: ignored by Czech education



THE CZECH WAY TO INCLUSION - MODES OF INTERVENTION

- Graded **support measures** based on the degree of disability „translated“ into SEN definition
- **Teaching methods** - regular school teachers are inadequately prepared, it is a matter of specific training (assessment, adaptation of teaching methods)
- **Curricular changes** – so far rather formal
- Missing systematic assessment: first Analysis in 2017



DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LENSES OF STATISTICS

- The total number of pupils with SEN has been rising since 2010 (between 2015 and 2017 by 17,000) - still being 9% - 10% of all primary school pupils
- Integration (access) – in 2015 70% of pupils with SEN in mainstream/regular schools; 90% of them are integrated individually
- **Roma children + socio-culturally disadvantaged:** not too much affected by joint education
- Pupils with LMD (light mental disorders) - their number in special schools has been steadily decreasing since 2010; between 2015 and 2016, their number in mainstream/regular schools grew from 26.4% to 30%, while for 7 months of the validity of the amendment from 30% to 31.5%. The amendment has slowed down the decline of pupils with LMD in special schools
- Highest increase: pupils with developmental learning and behavioral disorders (by 30% over seven months) + autistic + pupils with multiple defects
- More detailed analysis at: <http://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/novinar/prvni-rok-spolecneho-zzdelavani-v-reci-faktu-aneb-skutecnost>



MYTHS AND FACTS - IS THE CZECH VERSION OF INCLUSION INCORRECT (FORCED, UNPROFESSIONAL ETC.)?

- It is the **ideological pressure of Brussels, NGOs, Roma, etc.** **x** **the impact of NGOs is not that of a dictator, but that of one of the stakeholders**; negotiations with Brussels, a clear statement: the Czech system will preserve the quality sector of special education, will equalize opportunities for all and will introduce the option to review the decision
- **Directive, across the board (all)** **x** not - just more opportunities for selected individuals and not by order, but after the school counselling facility assessment and **on demand of parents**
- **Immediate (right from 1.9.2016)** **x** not – it is the beginning of a long distance track race (foreign experience shows 5-10 years **x** domestic critics: two months have proved total unreadiness and failure, it would be a worldwide unique diagnosis)
- **Legal (law and decree decide)** **x** not - gradual acceptance, adjusting procedures and conditions according to practical experience



RISK FACTORS FOR JOINT EDUCATION

- Prevention or remedy? Or both?
- Complicated structure of target categories + school counselling facilities overloaded
- Poor curricular changes and lack of quality in-service training (Career system)
- Absence of feedback (analyses, evaluation)
- Pressures on immediate legitimization
- Emerging long-lasting weaknesses of the system (system structure and absence of central management, quality of teacher training)



THE MOST CRITICAL RISKS

- Non-acceptance of change – public opinion hostile: rigidity + the changing frames of mind in society, i.e. new political correctness (harmful is all that gender, multi-culturalism, NGOs as parasites, "welcomers", forced civic education accepting „maladjusted ones"). It is politically correct to be solidary only with those who are the same as we are.
- Poor-quality support in a long-term perspective (5-7 years): money, equipment, education - and, above all, good quality assessment of the conditions in the field, etc..



INCLUSION - MAGNIFYING GLASS OF THE ISSUES NOT RELATED TO THE INCLUSION?

- It has been confirmed that the fundamental problem has been and for some time will be a change in attitude:
- 1) **Teachers** - Until the amendment came into force, not even hundreds of workshops helped. Most of them start to be interested now and do not feel the need to study - they want MEYS to provide the answers and solve specific problems of the school (how do I suggest tutoring, how to evaluate on a portfolio basis, etc.) - an example of a low readiness of many for the specific requirements of inclusion and also for more varied forms of pedagogical work. Understandable, but not a reason for cancelling the amendment
- 2) **School counselling facilities** - current bottleneck: external problems – both administrative and technical ones (lack of personnel + slow on-line recommendations), but in its essence, also unreadiness and sometimes unwillingness to communicate also „pedagogically“. Many perform more like clinical psychologists and "they will not learn what should be the job of the teacher“.



DILEMMAS OF THE PATHWAY TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- How to develop prevention and education if it cannot be supported by dominant/economic criteria (how to quantify what has not happened)? Typically: say in advance what specific results and of which children your work will bring. E.g. will the results of integrated pupils be better than in a special school?
- How to develop long-term work with actors concerned when results need to be reported in periods typical for business (trimester, semester, year)? E.g. ASP and its „evaluation" after 3 and 10 months
- How to enforce financially demanding methods and interventions in a "lack of" funds reasoning
- How to reconcile the inclusion of all SENs with the ideology of excellence, i.e. performance criteria applied to pupils' outcomes (competition of all against all)



CONCLUSION - INCLUSION AS A MIRROR OF THE MISERY AND THE GLORY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

- The introduction of an amendment prepared and approved by previous MEYS executives has increased the interest in education both for the public and politicians
- Positive effects: Awareness of the insufficient provisions in the profession (increase in salaries, staffing, tools for teaching- textbooks, equipment, SW; need to create a system of in-service CPD, etc.)
- Negative effects: tabloid hysteria, spread of myths (compulsory, global – all SEN's into regular schools, parents inspected by the state or vice versa parents dictate, etc.)
- Implementation has also revealed issues which have not been solved for years and which often point to an uncontrollable combination of negative effects of **decentralization** (regional autonomy and self-government) and **deregulation** (the autonomy of schools and the school counselling facilities "do as you wish"), with attempts to formulate any state or national policy - the ministry as „lame duck" : the counselling and „methodical“ role

