

PEDAGOGY OF PARTNERSHIP IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF THE EU COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the political support for inclusive education systems, achieving inclusive effectiveness in practice remains a challenge (SRIVASTAVA, DE BOER & PIJL, 2015; BLACK-HAWKINS, 2017). As a result, the use of pedagogy of partnership in inclusive education is growing. Globalization and internationalization of education have led to the emergence of various forms of partnership in inclusion (ARMSTRONG, 2013), and recent investigations are aimed at studying cases of collaboration between different professionals in order to include children with special needs in the educational environment. The purpose of the academic paper is to identify the features of partnership pedagogy on a practical level in inclusive education in the EU countries. The main research objectives are as follows:

- 1) to review the literature on the EU partnership practices;
- 2) to conduct content analysis and meta-analysis of research for 2015-2020 on the practice of partnership in the EU at the local level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive pedagogy is a pedagogical approach to learning in the context of diversity in order "to respond to individual differences between learners" (FLORIAN & SPRATT, 2013), which aims to avoid the marginalization of pupils (students) with special needs in the community (FLORIAN & BLACK-HAWKINS,

2011). The key task of inclusion is "the question is not whether teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in inclusive classrooms, but how to make the best use of what they already know when learners experience difficulty" (FLORIAN & LINKLATER, 2010). This approach provides a replacement of traditional personalized learning for diversity, with a focus on some students with special needs, with the goal of making learning accessible to everybody (BLACK-HAWKINS, 2017). In order to implement this approach, it is necessary to change the inclusive pedagogical thinking of teachers / educators. This approach has been improved through research discussions between educators (FLORIAN, YOUNG & ROUSE, 2010) and discussions with policymakers and scholars at national and international events on dissemination of information on inclusion (SPRATT & FLORIAN, 2015).

Waitoller & Kozleski (2013) define partnership as the basis of inclusive education for the development and learning of identity, ensuring that parents and teachers / educators are responsible for teaching pupils / students (WAITOLLER & KOZLESKI, 2013). In the scientific literature, various types of inclusion partnerships are considered, namely: between schools and universities (MOORE-CHERRY et al., 2016), non-governmental organizations and social services (MCINTYRE, 2009), between teachers / educators, parents and society (AFOLABI, 2014; WONG, NG, & POON, 2015; ŠUKYS, DUMČIENĖ & LAPĖNIENĖ, 2015), co-teaching as an instructional strategy (PANCOSOFAR & PETROFF, 2016) or interprofessional cooperation at

schools (SUC, BUKOVEC & KARPLJUK, 2017) towards ensuring joint responsibility for the inclusion of children with special needs. The partnership removes complex barriers for inclusion. Šukys, Dumčienė & Lapėnienė (2015) have proven that more than 50% of parents are involved in the process of inclusion of the child; 68,8% understand the needs of their own child; 30% of parents have considered themselves as full partners in interaction with teachers. At the same time, the interaction of partners from different fields and professions, with different methods of work and tools, different levels of experience, understanding of the complexity of inclusion leads to contradictions, misunderstandings and differences in learning, strategies and methods of working with children. For instance, educational programs for teachers are based on a student-centered approach; while in practice teachers have to use a teacher-centered approach (SMAGORINSKY, LAKLY, & JOHNSON, 2002). "The official rhetoric on inclusive education has only minimal effects on classroom practices" (TIWARI, DAS & SHARMA, 2015). Practical research projects on partnerships between schools and universities show great potential for professional development of inclusion (DEPPELER, 2006; DYSON & GALLANNAUGH, 2007; WAITOLLER & KOZLESKI, 2013). Moreover, educational programs of universities rarely change.

As a result of the interaction of different inclusion partners, a paradigm of involvement is developing, which demonstrates the effectiveness of cooperation, namely: parental involvement ensures students' academic success, and parents' expectations; beliefs and experiences are important elements of inclusion (AFOLABI, 2014). Additional factors for the effectiveness of the partnership are as follows: religion, social-cultural ideology, institutional barriers (TIWARI, DAS & SHARMA, 2015), "social-cultural, political, historical and economic contexts" for the implementation of inclusion policy (SMYTH et al., 2014).

The pedagogy of partnership in inclusion is a complex nonlinear process, forasmuch as it is characterized by connections between different subjects with different beliefs, expectations, mentality, and level of social-economic and psychophysiological development, level of education, religion and culture. These factors determine the success of a partnership and require more detailed study. In the scientific literature, the pedagogy of partnership at the local level is little systematized within the framework of interprofessional interaction between participants of the educational process.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology for studying the practice of partnership pedagogy in the EU countries has been used in the present research (SUC, BUKOVEC & KARPLJUK, 2017), by applying the method of content analysis and meta-analysis of publications (CORBIN & STRAUSS, 2014) related to inclusion, cooperation towards ensuring the success of education of children with special needs. The following research selection criteria have been used for the meta-analysis, namely: 1) time frame: 2015-2020; 2) the similar level of social-economic development and the proximity of the legal framework for regulating the inclusion of the EU countries; 3) the object of the research - pedagogy of partnership based on interprofessional interaction (SUC, BUKOVEC & KARPLJUK, 2017) or co-teaching as an instructional strategy (PANCOSOFAR & PETROFF, 2016) at schools.

Considering that the partnership in inclusive education provides for different levels of cooperation (international organizations and ministries - at international level, schools and universities - at national level, within schools - at local level, within universities using psychological care, therapeutic care, specialized services), then the object of the research is the local level due to the limited number of publications that study partnership at other levels of interested parties' cooperation.

RESULTS

Interprofessional interaction of interested parties of inclusion at the local level solves the problem of differentiating values, beliefs, knowledge and information about the theory and practice of inclusion. Such differentiation is caused by organizational, administrative, financial problems and affects the pedagogy of partnership.

Table 1. Results of the meta-analysis of the publication of partnership pedagogy: interprofessional cooperation

Author	Research method	Results
Suc, Bukovec & Karpljuk, (2017)	Focus groups and individual interviews of 36 primary school teachers and 9 occupational therapists, qualitative content analysis	Two categories of cooperation and different partnership strategies. Organizational and systemic (financing) factors of inclusion are barriers to the exchange of experience and knowledge. The role of some professionals as a partner is not recognized at schools. Inclusion in Slovenia is not fully implemented due to the lack of a partnership between professionals.
Hong & Shaffer (2015)	Structured interviews and case studies of teachers and therapists	The partnership ensures the transfer of professional knowledge and influences the experience of professionals, providing an interdisciplinary effect of inclusion.
Gallagher et al. (2020)	Two stages of the Delphi online survey, a sample of 26 researchers, parents and teachers, content analysis	The partnership ensures coherence between the goals of interested parties. Inter-professional collaboration (IPC) is considered as a tool for school inclusion.
Ineland (2015)	Qualitative interview of 4 teachers	Professional ambivalence concerning partnership and inclusion. Administrative, organizational and practical problems of cooperation through different views, values, beliefs of teachers.
Mælan et al. (2020)	Qualitative case study of the experience of inclusion and partnership in Norway (teachers, school principals and specialized services)	Initiatives for establishing interprofessional partnerships served as a basis for understanding the role of each participant in inclusion. Specialized services have provided teachers with support through pedagogical practice.
Norwich et al. (2018)	Methodology of thematic research of teachers and psychologists' work who use innovative pedagogical methods in inclusive schools	The significant potential of interprofessional cooperation of teachers and psychologists for the introduction of reflexive pedagogical practice in teaching children with special needs has been identified.

Source: Search data.

The participants reach a consensus of goals within the partnership and argue that the joint practice of teachers should provide equal opportunities for children with special educational needs at school. Support for the child should be individualized; however, it should not be aimed at distinguishing one student from others, but to ensure participation in the learning process. From this perspective, the first prerequisite underlying the interprofessional partnership is that cooperation ensures the inclusion of the child at school (GALLAGHER et al., 2020). Basically, parents hold up with the viewpoint that the child's psychophysiological problems should be considered as a state of health for two key reasons. As a result, this provides benefits in receiving services / funding and in convincing others of the seriousness of their child's needs (GALLAGHER et al., 2020).

Most interested parties in the partnership argue that the learning environment determines the level of severity of the child's problems and the level of awareness of the problem by other participants. Evaluating a child is aimed at understanding his / her differences in comparison with others, rather than diagnosing. The school environment is a barrier for children with special needs in achievement and success, and, therefore, needs to be adapted to the new realities of inclusive education. The next prerequisite for interprofessional partnership is the emergence of differences in the learning process. Therefore, the general practice of inclusion should provide for adaptation in order to ensure the success of all students. The teacher and other participants in the partnership should transform the practice of inclusion through the effective adaptation of the child to the new learning environment instead of focusing on his / her special needs. This requires constant teachers' training and professional support of teachers by psychologists and therapists. Sufficient time and resources should be ensured to provide practical services when planning therapeutic services at schools for children with disabilities (e.g. DLD).

The role of the child and his or her right to make decisions is the most controversial topic in a professional partnership. Although adults agree with the child's right to make decisions, some participants are unable to define the concepts and types of rights. Teachers and parents understand the child's right to be heard, however, they note the need to take into account the child's age, knowledge, language competence and other characteristics (GALLAGHER et al., 2020).

Adults note the importance and usefulness of the child's information when making decisions about support, however, the level of usefulness is determined by "experts" based on subjective knowledge and beliefs (GALLAGHER et al., 2020). Such ambivalence (about the child's role in making decisions concerning support) can be explained by the generally accepted belief that the child has not been formed as a competent person yet. This leads to skepticism about the validity of the child's information contribution in decision-making. It can also be explained by the unwillingness of adults to relinquish power / control over the child due to the need for adults to take additional actions to ensure his / her rights. This means that children with special needs are rarely involved in the decision-making process regarding their education and support, even if they are present.

The main focus in the practice of partnership pedagogy should be on attitudes, views and perceptions of teachers' inclusive education in compulsory schools and special schools. Educational policies of the EU inclusion (for instance, Sweden) include such important values as equality and inclusiveness; however, there is still a tendency to individualize the problems of some students. In the daily practice of inclusion, there is a problem of "hanging" labels on students without special educational needs when they face organizational or social difficulties (INELAND, 2015).

This is due to the problem of institutional ambivalence, which is reflected in the investigations studied in the present academic paper. Different categories of teachers, parents and students note the existence of this problem due to the entrenched traditional roles, norms and identities of the individual, which is characterized by certain norms of social-physical and psychological development. The desire of teachers to ensure the rapid inclusion of students also causes a number of problems, in particular, professional burnout, which needs support from a psychologist, a therapist (INELAND, 2015). Therefore, in practice, teachers are faced with a professional challenge connected with the imposition of additional responsibilities and ensuring full interaction with all students in the classroom. In practice, a conflict emerges between the educational and social logic of teachers.

Educational logic (formal / ideological) is characterized by values associated with such ideological ideals as normality, equality and involvement. Social logic is not informal, but vague and more pragmatic, depending on the characteristics of a particular inclusion partner (teachers, parents, students, psychologists, therapists). This duality affects cooperation in the implementation of inclusive practices, forming an ambivalent view of students with their special skills, abilities and competencies, which have determined the relevant inclusive methods of work (when, how, with what consequences) (INELAND, 2015). It also leads to hesitation among teachers concerning what concepts, norms and values should be put into practice in everyday work. This can be considered as a result of the influence of the institutional context in which ideological, legal and moral issues determine the expected activities and orientations of teachers.

However, in everyday practice, external expectations often face more informal and pragmatic situations where teachers have to respond to individual needs. This implies a formal / informal dichotomy, which further enhances the ambivalence expressed by teachers (INELAND, 2015). Thus, in order to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive practices, participants collaborate; by the way, leaders also require knowledge on organizing inclusion, depending on the environment (organization and structure). This includes the way teachers, parents, administrators and school leaders respond to external pressure on schools, forasmuch as such external subjects formulate expectations about the instruction's performance.

Within the framework of cooperation between teachers and psychologists, teachers appreciate initiatives that help develop mutual understanding of the role and responsibilities of professional teachers and specialists of higher educational institutions. Secondly, initiatives on creating interprofessional relationships can lay the groundwork for interprofessional cooperation. However, in practice, there is a need to adapt psychologists to the needs of teachers, offering appropriate assistance to support students in the classroom. The teacher - psychologist partnership ensures the stability and consistency of pedagogical practice at school (MÆLAN et al., 2020).

Thus, interprofessional relations at both the organizational and interpersonal levels are important for the cooperation of teachers and psychologists. To start with, interprofessional teams are recognized as the basis for building relationships at the inter-organizational level. In particular, these teams provide a mechanism for forming an understanding of the role and responsibilities of teachers. However, even with the organizational support of school teachers and frequent meetings, different cultural values and ambiguity regarding professional roles take precedence over psychological support (MÆLAN et al., 2020). These cultural differences can affect the content, direction and results of a partnership. In practice, there is also the problem of excessive discussion of teachers' support methods instead of providing real support. Teachers generally understand their primary role in promoting mental health and counseling concerning students' mental health.

There are few investigations on studying the practice of supporting students with special needs through learning. Therefore, teachers have little understanding of their own role in providing support and the role of a full partner who communicates with the student on equal terms. The challenge for teachers lies in integrating proposals concerning individualized support in everyday context, in which whole-class teaching should take precedence. Teachers can generally assign the responsibility of supporting a student with mental health problems to professionals on a busy school day. The presence of specialists on psychological support at schools, as well as limited school resources and intense academic pressure, can force teachers to prioritize other tasks (MÆLAN et al., 2020). Nevertheless, educators and professionals on psychological support are more likely to collaborate when they are able to build relationships based on respect and trust, eventuated in a result that is consistent with other studies. In addition, when teachers and psychologists are familiar with each other's work experiences and skills, they use their combined competence and discuss the student's support through their social and pedagogical practice.

The Swedish study of Gustavsson and Townsend (2007), which had been examining collaboration between teachers and therapists, also found that both parties were dissatisfied with the level of collaboration. Another interesting finding has been revealed that therapists tend to seek a higher level of collaboration compared to school teachers. Swedish schools have shown little interest in participatory activities, which have been described by the authors as special measures to enable children with special needs to participate fully in school activities and include access to space and activities in the school environment. All these types of measures fall under the scope of occupational therapy (SUC, BUKOVEC & KARPLJUK, 2017).

In a study conducted by Gustavsson and Townsend (2007), psychologists were more likely to increase their school attendance and wanted to expand collaboration beyond annual meetings. In contrast, the American study conducted by Bose and Hinojosa (2008) found an equal desire to strengthen the cooperation of both occupational therapists and teachers. This may mean that there are differences between countries and regions, and the perception of the need for cooperation can be the result of many factors, including professional and organizational culture, already established by the level of cooperation and recognition of different disciplines.

Among other things, this requires more frequent meetings with teachers and other professionals employed at the school in order to increase professional recognition. Better cooperation and communication has been facilitated by greater closeness. For instance, shared access to physical space has encouraged communication, strengthening mutual respect and enhancing students' learning, all of which has contributed to better inclusion of children with special needs. Psychologists have often expressed a desire to increase their physical presence at school; they have considered this as a possible strategy to improve cooperation.

It seems that actively involved parents have often been vital to the success of collaboration and inclusion, and many steps have been taken at their request. Participants described how important the parents' contribution was and that they often initiated cooperation and implementation of various adaptations for their child. Moreover, psychologists were often involved at the initiative of parents, and parents acted as goal-keepers for professionals.

It seems that nowadays the cooperation between mentors and parents is better than between different professionals. This phenomenon has also been noted in the Swedish investigation of Suc, Bukovec & Karpljuk (2017). In contrast, the Portuguese study of children with special educational needs showed that parents were not necessarily involved in their children's school life, and schools should coordinate family interactions (RODRIGUES et al. 2015). Many experts believe that all interested parties (teachers, parents and children) should feel involved in the successful implementation of the inclusion model; after all, when the student has great needs, there is a great need for cooperation. The family and the school can be considered as institutions where education and inclusion take place; consequently, their cooperation should be effective (RODRIGUES et al., 2015). This concept was also confirmed by our research, forasmuch as parents were often recognized as an important part of the inclusion model.

Another observation of our research revealed that when psychologists attended classes, their interventions were mostly focused on the level of physical disabilities of children. Their main contribution to the inclusion process envisaged provision of the piece of advice on assistive devices and adaptation of the school environment. They also sometimes provided pieces of advice on handling techniques with a child and suggested practical solutions to the problems teachers face with. A more holistic approach to treatment was insufficient due to time and organizational constraints, as well as other factors such as teachers who are unfamiliar with the role and competence of psychologists and therapists who use a limited number of approaches. It has previously been found that psychologists, working with children with disabilities, often rely heavily on specific approaches (e.g., sensory integration) that are not always evidence-based, limiting their intervention to only one aspect of the child's problem (KADAR, MCDONALD and LENTIN, 2012). Although all psychologists are trained in more holistic (profession-based) approaches, some needs of children and families are often overlooked because these holistic approaches are not implemented.

DISCUSSION

In the process of forming pedagogical strategies of training taking into account "all", teachers consider both the individuality of each pupil, and collective of pupils (BIESTA, 2015). Pedagogy of partnership should provide solutions to the individual problems of children with special needs without focusing on their developmental problems, which requires the use of new teaching methods. The teacher should ensure his own flexibility and adaptation of students with different levels of development to the learning process. Respect for the dignity of each person in the learning community is a fundamental prerequisite for this approach, and the recognition of the rights of the child with special needs and the inclusion of his / her views in decision-making are important elements of partnership.

The case studies explored in the present academic paper provide examples of teachers who demonstrate how a coherent set of ideas can be used as a basis for informing their approaches to classroom practice. Examining the actual methods used by teachers, Spratt & Florian (2015) prove that inclusive pedagogy does not offer a completely new set of practices; however, it takes into account various cultural, religious, organizational, institutional differences. For instance, teachers used shared group work, formative assessment and the selection of students who are widely recognized as useful classroom practitioners.

However, the hallmark of this approach is how and when these different strategies are chosen to ensure students' solidarity and minimize categorization and determinism. Teachers selectively and purposefully use a number of defined pedagogical strategies in order to ensure that everyone is included in meaningful learning. Pedagogy of partnership is based on the interaction of participants with different views, attitudes, perceptions of students' problems, which in practice causes a number of challenges and barriers to cooperation. Therefore, the teacher is responsible for the choice of teaching methods and flexibility of the educational process, using the knowledge of other specialists, the support of psychologists, therapists (SPRATT & FLORIAN, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Partnership in inclusive education is a style of interaction characterized by voluntary participation. All parties involved in this process have equal status, forasmuch as they work towards achieving a common goal. People who collaborate also share decision-making processes, resources, and responsibility for results. It is important to know each other's professional characteristics and competencies for good cooperation, as well as to have an effective communication style (both formal and informal) and have positive working and personal relationships. New practices develop as collaboration progresses; while solving various problems together, team members learn and grow as individuals, as professionals and as a team.

Many barriers to good collaboration are described in the literature on inclusive education, and it is suggested that further research is needed to clearly articulate these barriers in a specific context. The most common barriers include pedagogy of partnership, namely: (1) unclear roles and responsibilities; (2) professionals do not experience each other as equal partners and have different theoretical and philosophical experience, often through education and employment in different systems; (3) organizational barriers and (4) lack of formal communication time (COCHRAN-SMITH et. al., 2009). Our research has identified some factors that affect interprofessional cooperation in the context of inclusive education in the EU countries. Teachers, parents, psychologists and therapists have different experiences of cooperation. Teachers expressed the viewpoint that external cooperation was mostly effective; however, they often faced the problem of formal discussion of support. At the same time, psychologists believed that their contribution was not always welcomed at school and that communication and information exchange were insufficient.

Both groups of professionals believed that obstacles to better cooperation were generally external to them; they attributed them to organizational and systemic factors, as well as to the personal characteristics of other professionals involved in the process. Different participants of the inclusion have a sufficient level of knowledge about interaction; however, in practice, different views on interaction have led to the ineffectiveness of the partnership.

The practical significance of the research lies in the possibility of considering the obstacles and barriers of pedagogy of partnership when planning inclusion (possible failures, risks and ways to resolve possible conflicts in cooperation) within the school curriculum. Prospects for further research lie in exploring partnerships at the national level - in collaboration between schools and universities in order to identify how school inclusion practices affect the effectiveness of inclusion in higher educational institutions.

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Pedagogy of partnership in inclusive education of the EU countries

Pedagogia da parceria na educação inclusiva dos países da UE

Pedagogía de la asociación en la educación inclusiva de los países de la UE

Resumo

O objetivo do trabalho acadêmico foi identificar as características da pedagogia da parceria em um nível prático em educação inclusiva nos países da UE. Foi utilizada uma metodologia qualitativa na pesquisa baseada na análise de conteúdo e na meta-análise das publicações para 2015-2020 sobre as questões da pedagogia de parceria baseada na interação interprofissional de diferentes profissionais, pais e filhos. Os resultados revelaram que a parceria na educação inclusiva é um estilo de interação caracterizado pela participação voluntária. No processo de interação, os interessados transformam crenças, valores e formam conhecimento sobre as estratégias de inclusão mais eficazes. Compreender as peculiaridades do desenvolvimento psicofísico de uma criança com necessidades especiais proporciona uma inclusão efetiva. A adaptação da criança depende do nível de compreensão do adulto sobre as necessidades educacionais da criança, considerando sua opinião na tomada de decisão em situações problemáticas de aprendizagem. O papel da criança como parceira plena na inclusão determina o nível de adaptação no ambiente educacional.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia da parceria. Inclusão. Estratégias de interação na educação inclusiva. Interação interprofissional na inclusão.

Abstract

The purpose of the academic paper was to identify the features of partnership pedagogy on a practical level in inclusive education in the EU countries. A qualitative methodology was used in the research based on content analysis and the meta-analysis of publications for 2015-2020 on the issues of partnership pedagogy based on interprofessional interaction of different professionals, parents and children. The results have revealed that partnership in inclusive education is a style of interaction characterized by voluntary participation. In the process of interaction, interested parties transform beliefs, values and form knowledge about the most effective inclusion strategies. Understanding the peculiarities of the psychophysical development of a child with special needs provides effective inclusion. The child's adaptation depends on the level of adult's understanding of the child's educational needs, considering his opinion in decision-making in problematic learning situations. The child's role as a full-fledged partner in inclusion determines the level of adaptation in the educational environment.

Keywords: Pedagogy of partnership. Inclusion. Strategies of interaction in inclusive education. Interprofessional interaction in inclusion.

Resumen

El objetivo del documento académico era identificar las características de la pedagogía de la asociación a nivel práctico en la educación inclusiva en los países de la UE. En la investigación se utilizó una metodología cualitativa basada en el análisis de contenidos y el metanálisis de publicaciones para 2015-2020 sobre los temas de pedagogía de asociación basada en la interacción interprofesional de diferentes profesionales, padres e hijos. Los resultados han revelado que la asociación en la educación inclusiva es un estilo de interacción caracterizado por la participación voluntaria. En el proceso de interacción, las partes interesadas transforman creencias, valores y forman conocimiento sobre las estrategias de inclusión más efectivas. Comprender las peculiaridades del desarrollo psicofísico de un niño con necesidades especiales proporciona una inclusión efectiva. La adaptación del niño depende del nivel de comprensión del adulto de las necesidades educativas del niño, considerando su opinión en la toma de decisiones en situaciones problemáticas de aprendizaje. El papel del niño como socio de pleno derecho en la inclusión determina el nivel de adaptación en el entorno educativo.

Palabras-clave: Pedagogía de la asociación. Inclusión. Estrategias de interacción en educación inclusiva. Interacción interprofesional en la inclusión.