ARGUMENTS AND COUNTER-ARGUMENTS CONCERNING THE INTEGRATED EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH MOTOR DISORDER

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As a result of a humanistic philosophical attitude the approach to 'difference' has fundamentally altered in the past fifty years. Due to this change in approach, the education provisions for disabled people are interpreted differently and are also changing these days. Due to the international strategic approach and my own personal and professional motivation, I have begun a comparative study to explore how integrated and/or segregated education operates in Hungary and Spain. The majority of respondents in Spain agree with integrated education whereas in Hungary respondents are for integration in principle but practice shows that children, adults and teachers i.e. society has strong discriminative attitudes.

Keywords: special education, integrated education, special educational needs, acceptance, adverse discrimination

Precedents and research objectives

How 'difference' is judged has entirely altered as a result of a change in the classical philosophical approach in the past fifty years. Thus 'difference' is no longer interpreted as a negative quality but rather as a variety of 'normal' in the case of a disabled person. Consequently, the educational care for people with disabilities has gained a different interpretation, which is still changing.

In the process of change the 1975 Civil Code of the USA can be regarded as a turning point. It stipulated that every disabled child must have a right to education in the least disadvantageous environment, i.e. most should attend mainstream primary schools.

The demand for programmes to be introduced by 2000, enabling children with special needs to be educated in mainstream schools, was raised at the World Conference of UNESCO in Salamanca in 1994. The EU stipulated its comprehensive strategy concerning the disabled in 1996. For Hungary, as a member state, that should be an example to follow.

At present one of the main issues of educational policy in Hungary is how to implement integration, how to avoid mistakes and how to find the best way - learning from experience abroad.

I have participated in the education of children with special needs at the András Pető Institute for the Motor-disabled and Conductor Training College for nearly three decades and through a cooperation project have experience and close knowledge of the efforts towards integration in the Navarra province of Spain.

The above facts have motivated me to collect data for a comparative study and, based on the findings, to stipulate similarities, differences and possible patterns to be followed.

Hypotheses

Data in present academic literature show that researchers do not agree on whether it is sufficient and practical to use the expressions *research questions and problems* or *set up hypothesis* in qualitative research (Sántha, 2006). I am of the opinion that setting up hypotheses has helped me to undertake a qualitative investigation including quantitative elements and data representation, which thereby become easier to interpret and explain. I have set up dominant alternative hypotheses also indicating a direction.

1. The more accepting a society is the higher is the percentage of children with special needs integrated in mainstream education.
2. If a government's policy is clear-cut and the policy is financially supported, educational integration must be aimed at.
3. I also suppose that should the special educational system in a country be of a mediocre quality this factor would also push towards educational integration.
4. Whereas an excellent quality of special educational system and the professional competence of special teachers will have an opposite effect, i.e. support segregation in education, since it is the vital interest of special education to keep their institutions in a segregated form.

I have focused on these broad issues in my research; however, I have also stipulated *sub-hypotheses* at points connected to concrete issues.

The methodology of the research

The sampling method

I have applied various procedures when establishing the sample to be tested, in order that it would reflect the characteristic features of the population, thus random, stratified, cluster and full sampling methods have been employed.

Random sampling was used in the case of adults and Spanish children. The pupils between 10 and 14 of a primary school, the students in their final year of a high-ranking and a mediocre grammar school were selected by stratified sampling. Cluster sampling was applied by the questionnaires sent to the parents of children receiving conductive education in the András Pető Institute for the Motor-disabled and Conductor Training College and the Institute in Pamplona (Instituto Espanol de Educación Conductiva). Full sampling was applied in the case of conductors who are all employed by the institute, of all the parents whose school aged children are pupils of the Pető Institute and also by

contacting all primary schools in Budapest and Navarra. Due to the hypotheses, the research strategy is a correlation exploring strategy.

Data collection

Written questioning was used as the means of data collection: questionnaire survey and attitude examination.

Main questions dominate the questionnaire. However, it also includes supplementary questions, which increase the reliability of information gained. Open and direct questions were both included to provide a larger scope for the respondents, who also had the opportunity to supplement or add their comments to nearly all the questions.

The range of questionees

The investigation was comparative, therefore questionnaires in Hungarian and Spanish with identical content were sent out to the following groups in the second term of the academic year 2005/2006:

The sampling frame:	**No. of sent out**	**No. of Responses No.**	**% Responding**
Children (HU)	489	381	78
Children (ES)	100	37	37
Adults (HU)	150	53	35
Adults (ES)	150	33	22
Pető parents	120	60	50
Conductors	73	23	31
Former Pető parents (HU)	75	19	25
Former Pető parents (ES)	60	9	15
Headmasters, teachers (HU)	116	3	2
Headmasters, teachers (ES)	349	2	0.5
Σ:	**1682**	**620**	**37**

1682 questionnaires were sent out in total and only 37% were returned. There is a rather significant discrepancy between the quantity of responses among the different groups, i.e. between 0.5% of the group of headmasters and teachers and 78% in the case of children.

The content of the questionnaires was similar for both adults and children, as well as teachers and parents.

Information from adults and children concerned to what extent they were able to accept children with special needs.

The main questions for teachers focussed on evaluating professional competence. However, this was also put to parents, just like support, financial situation and the dominance of acceptance or refusal. Naturally, everyone (except for the children) could express his or her view concerning integrated or segregated education.

Data processing

The raw data were collocated in larger units by the coding process and were fed in a special, purpose-made data handling programme in order to make the description of the contents and the investigation colleration possible. When putting the questionnaires together I already tried to work with pre-defined categories, but new ones were also devised during the investigation.

The questionnaires contain a higher number of questions than the analysis. The questions and responses to them were not included in the processing, which did not show relevant data.

Research results

Conclusions based on the results for the given sample were drawn at the time of data processing and interpreting. During the research I contrasted my general hypotheses with the experience and facts. Thus I drew my conclusions as to how far the hypotheses were confirmed or why they had to be discarded on a deductive logical basis. During data processing results were contrasted with the sub-hypotheses stipulated at certain places. The latter process is not being discussed here. Only the relevance of the sub-hypotheses are analysed.

Acceptance is the primary and most important condition of social integration in a broad sense and integrated education in a narrow sense of the word. All the other existing or missing conditions may enhance or inhibit the integrational process, however, it must be seen that the process can only be successful even in the case of the optimum existence of all the conditions if people give up their prejudice and accept children with special needs as equal partners. How far it is actually manifested has been investigated from several aspects with the following questions:

1. Have you ever helped a person with disabilities?
2. Can you imagine a disabled child to be your friend?
3. What is your attitude to people with disabilities?
4. Do you think you behave differently with children with special needs and healthy children?
5. Do you feel teachers discriminate against your child?
6. Do you feel any teachers discriminate against the disabled?
7. Do you feel healthy children discriminate against disabled children?
8. Do you feel other parents discriminate against your child?
9. Do you think there is any discrimination between the disabled and the healthy on a social level?

As a summary, it must be stated that the respondents who do not themselves face the problem, in principle children and adults present almost the same level of acceptance in both countries. Therefore I may as well qualify my hypothesis, which says that the more accepting a society is the more dominant integration in education is, as correct in principle. However, in reality *my presupposed concept is incorrect* since if we thoroughly look at the respondents, who *are involved in the issue on a daily basis*, at least one third or even four fifth in a certain aspect *feel negative discrimination against children with special needs* in Hungary. The same is true for 50% of the respondents at most in the Spanish sample. Thus Hungarian data show marked discrimination and therefore it is not surprising

that integrated education is not dominant in Hungary. The Spanish data show discrimination by 30% less, however, it cannot be declared fully that my hypothesis were correct. Since the direction of cause and effect is not clarified it can be presumed that in Spain integration in education has fully taken place for the last more than one and a half decades; only 0.4% of children with special needs eligible for education is taught in special institutions (35). So the population may be more acceptable because integration is an everyday practice and it's been accepted as such. The general practice abroad shows that schools must take pupils with special needs and the primary question who cannot be integrated is raised and not the opposite, who cannot be. In Hungary we have only reached the level where a school must be found who is willing to accept a child with special needs. Of course, it is a long developmental process and Hungary is only at the beginning (Csányi, 2003).

If *the opportunities for integration in education are examined from the aspect of government policy, legislation and financing* the following must be the starting point. As a member of the EU Hungary has not joined a community which is still looking for an outcome in this field but one which "*manifests an extremely strong, coherent policy representing characteristic values and directions*" (Halász, 2004). The policy to integrate children with special needs began to take effect in the 1980s. In 1990 the EU Council of Ministers made a commitment to integration in the form of a resolution and enacted that integration must represent the primary form in education. As a result the problems of children with special needs was emphatically included in the EU educational programme. At the same time in the middle of the 1960s the European Social Fund was introduced, which also created the financial resources. In the 1980s they served social integration (Helios Programme) then assisted to finance projects aiming at the implementation of integrated education. The resources of the European Social Fund are accessible to Hungary, as an EU member state in the framework of the Human Resources Developmental Operative Programme of the National Development Plan (HEFOP).

In *Spain* since the declaration of the Constitution (1) it has become clear that "*every citizen has a right to education (Article 27) and the administrative bodies are to promote the integration of the disabled in all spheres of society (Article 49) with special regard to education*". A few years later in 1985 the integration programme began and as a result the number of children with special needs was rapidly reduced in special education. An available financial background also helped the process of integration. Similarly to the Hungarian model, financial support in Spain is also based on input, i.e. schools receive a raised sum per capita depending on how many children with special educational needs they have.

It was much later, in 1993 when Law LXXIXX on Education opened the way to integration. Still, the percentage of those participating in integrated education did not reach 3% ten years later, although the data of national professional committees on rehabilitation (OSZRB) show that the proportion of children recommended for integration and tested in 1997/98 and 1999/2000 grew by 20% in the case of children with visual impairment, 37% among children with motor-disabilities and 58% in the case of pupils with hearing impairment (Kőpatakiné, 2004).

Recalling the hypothesis *if the legislative and financial conditions are present integration must take priority* the following statements must be made.

Unlike in several European countries, the full introduction of integration in education has been delayed by more than a decade and a long period of time is still needed for a change in attitude. More so, since the professional competence of teachers is unsatisfactory with regard to the education of children with special needs and employing special teachers or utilising their assistance are not built in the system yet. In Spain, however, special education is part of the curriculum in general teacher training thus the country is not only at an advantage with regard to timing but also professional expertise. Therefore in *to contradict my hypothesis* it must be stated that *integration in education is not to be introduced categorically and by all means as soon as possible*. Another counter-argument may be the child himself, since the possibility of integration is largely affected by the extent the special educational needs are experienced in individual children. In addition, the facts, that access for the disabled in public buildings has not yet been implemented and no supervisory programme has been introduced to record whether the raised sum per capita provided for the schools is really spent on children with special needs, cannot be disregarded.

Another of the hypothesis at the beginning of the research was that *if a country does not have an excellent special educational system integration in education will have a stronger preference*. The hypothesis mainly referred to Spain because in Hungary special education has a long tradition with an outstanding system of special institutions and well-qualified experts. Since the questionnaires filled in Spain represent only a small sample, no conclusions of a general nature can be drawn. What we can still consider is the academic reference which analyses the education reform in the study "The Education Reform and the Centres of Special Education". The programme was adopted favourably mainly for the reason because *segregated education of pupils with special needs*, which had earlier been provided, *proved to be unsatisfactory*. I do not have the right to question this strong statement. My experience when visiting special institutions shows that emphasis shifts from education to care. Thus it can be stated that those schools did not really satisfy the educational requirements in correspondence to the requirements of present so-called "knowledge based societies".

The last hypothesis was that *an extremely good special education system and the professional competence of highly qualified special teachers reinforces segregation in education*, since the existential interest of special education is to maintain its institutions in a segregated form. Of course, this hypothesis referred to the public education practice in Hungary.

The high standard of Hungarian special education is due to well-qualified special teachers: "*The deep traditions of special education in Hungary, the professional mission of its historical personalities and its humanistic attitude have created such a special educational, professional consciousness which have not questioned the positions of segregated education for a long time*." (Lányiné, 1995)

Today as a member of the European Union we must join the organisations and processes supported by the EU and follow its educational policy including the implementation of equal opportunities both on a social level and education. Legislation has been passed and measures are still being adopted. However, in many cases the legislative measures are not adequate yet, for example, in the case of a free choice of schools. Parents, a professional and rehabilitation committee and the special school or the headmaster of the school in the catchment area decide whether a child or pupil with special educational needs

will start his studies in a special (segregated) or a mainstream (integrated) school. The law stipulates that "*the parents have the right to chose a school for their child. If they decide on integration the professional committee makes a recommendation and the local educational authority draws up a list of schools and the parents will chose one corresponding to their child's special needs*" (Ministry of Culture and Education, MKM, measure 11/1994, § 15, Article 5; MKM measure 14/1994, § 12, Article 3). The above shows that free choice is not fully possible since a list is predefined. And although the parents can freely chose a school from the list in reality they often have to go from one school to another as long as they find a headmaster who is willing to accept the child with special needs, change the founding document of the school and employ special experts to provide for the development of the child's individual developmental requirements. A free choice is further hindered by the lack of free access to buildings and although it has to be provided legally, deadlines are constantly changing and implementation is difficult and slow. Personal problems may also make the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools difficult. Children with perceptive and sensory problems require completely different attitude and treatment from those with motor-disabilities or who are hyperactive. If schools do not get suitable special experts, travelling special teachers to help them, their positive attitude, which existed in the beginning, slackens and by the time the child reaches middle school they actually want to get free of the problem. Other factors which reinforce segregation in education could be drawn up in a long list. Any educational differentiation intends to provide education based on children's abilities and needs for their optimum development. But how far is the intention to differentiate present in Hungary's public education? It must be unfortunately and honestly stated that it is not daily practice in mainstream primary schools. In a knowledge based society the teachers' interest is to present as much material as fast as possible and that is what teachers do mainly by teaching in the frontal method. Therefore, education based on individual abilities cannot be implemented and it is only a question of time how rapidly the difference from the average turns out when the child becomes left behind or when a child with better abilities than the average gets bored. Inclusion would require helpful and well-motivated teachers with outstanding expertise since differentiated education should be dominant in an integrated school which demands much extra work on behalf of teachers.

If European trends are to be followed, but only as far as they meet the requirements of children with special needs at an optimum level, the institutions of special education have to be converted to resource centres. This change in function means that the compiled expertise must filter through to mainstream education including the full employment of or part time 'travelling' special teachers. The process has already begun but a long time is still needed to reach the optimum standard. This, however, should not represent the idea that institutions of special education must disappear fully. They must partly remain since the number of children with special needs who would best benefit from integrated education is limited. The above shows that the hypothesis was correct or needs only some adjustment, i.e. the system of special schools must be partly maintained and well-qualified special experts must contribute to mainstream education at least in part of their time in the future.

Summary

My research has made an attempt to explore the arguments for and against integration, primarily in the case of motor disabled children with special educational needs in a comparative study. I have chosen this topic because on several of my trips to Spain my experience showed that nobody turned around when seeing a person in a wheelchair, no-one wondered seeing people who are blind or have impaired vision selling lottery tickets and children with special educational needs went to mainstream schools with healthy children. I hope that my research will have results which may be worth applying in the process of achieving equal opportunities in Hungary.

Academic literature and experience show that the two countries under review occupy two opposite ends on a scale regarding attempts at integration. In Spain integration in education has a past of more than two decades, while in Hungary development in this respect began a decade ago, although with a couple of examples as early as the 1970s. In Spain the question is who cannot be included in a mainstream school at all; in Hungary the issue is whether there is a mainstream school where the opportunity to integrate exists. In Spain only children in a severe condition and with multiple educational problems would participate in special education, while in Hungary only 3% of children with special educational needs learn in mainstream schools. This can be attributed to the fact that Spain cannot be characterised as having a very high standard of special education, whereas the opposite is true for Hungary.

Although since the end of the 1990s more attention has been paid to children with special needs (with motor disability) also in Hungary, the transport issue is not resolved, unlike in Spain. While moving off and onto pavements with a wheelchair does not present a problem in Spain, this is still the case in Hungary. In Spain where buses do not have low floors a special ramp can be let down operated by the driver at the middle door, allowing people in wheelchairs to get on, which is not otherwise used for boarding the bus. In Hungary there are only a few buses with low floors and only a few tramlines have vehicles which are suitable for wheelchairs for boarding. The same is true for the underground. Compared to Spain, the underground stations cannot be approached either by a well-built, mildly sloping ramp and/or a lift. The situation is even worse with regard to long-distance transport, in that coaches and trains are practically unsuitable for people with disabilities. Electric wheelchairs, which would ease the problem of moving around in the city, cost too high a price, thus only a few can actually use them. Parents of children with special needs have no other choice but to buy a large size car or a mini-bus, provided they can afford it. The families can get financial support towards that but only in principle, since the sum does not contribute sufficiently to the price of a legally specified suitable vehicle - a maximum 330 thousand forints can be applied for. The small group of people who have dealt with the maze of bureaucracy, having proved all the necessary conditions were present and in the end bought the car face the next problem, which is parking. Although free parking is available and marked for cars with the necessary licence, other drivers do not observe this and take up the parking places, what's more for free. It cannot be declared that in Spain nobody ineligible would use a parking place for the disabled, but driving morale is much higher than in Hungary in all respects.

I would like to outline only one aspect with regard to equal opportunities in education - computer assisted education. When a special educational need is

stipulated in Spain the employees of the special methodological centres begin to acquire and adapt the suitable means so that by the time the child starts school everything, adjusted to his individual needs, will be at his disposal. This does not mean that everything is free of charge for the children but the means are for their personal use and in addition the methodological centres also make sure that the means are still suitable, modifying them if necessary. It cannot be stated that this is the case in all the administrative regions of Spain. However, in my experience the above is true for Navarra province where the regional authority regards education and health as of primary importance, and invests considerable financial recourses in the two areas. In Hungary the situation is unfortunately very different. Although a part of the families have a PC, they buy the computer themselves or the parents sometimes put in applications in order to make a purchase. A PC adapted for individual needs is very rare, even in special education. Most frequently it is the absence of computers or their adapted version for the individual which prevents children from performing in correspondence with their intellectual abilities at an appropriate level.

Parents play a determining role in any country when equal opportunities or integration in education are concerned. Either social or educational integration can only be successful if parents accept their children and realistically regard them for what they are. They must be aware of their children's special needs, abilities and condition at any time, so that they can utilise the facilities of the education system, other types of intervention or possible medical treatment. In addition, they must also handle the extra expenses in a cooperative and disciplined way.

I have participated in the education of children with special needs throughout my career and I am deeply shocked and offended by prejudice experienced daily. *Since my entering into the profession was accidental, full acceptance cannot be regarded as an acquired attitude on my behalf. [What does this previous sentence mean? Bob]* It is true, however, that an optimum standard and efficient education of children with special needs can only be performed by those who see the difference in the children as far as we are all individual and different. I support and regard integration in education as a positive tendency, provided it is kept within reasonable limits and is not enforced under any condition. I consider it important to begin integration as early as possible, in nursery school, where the pleasure of playing would enhance mutual acceptance. As a result, an accepting generation would grow up slowly. With regard to choosing a school much consideration is required whereby a form of education must be found which is adapted to the child's optimum development and is based on his individual needs and abilities. At present there is much good experience in the field of special education and there is a slow, positive change towards inclusion. However, a long time is need for a well-established network of integrated school to be available. Therefore, I think thorough, restrained consideration and moderation should prevail in this field. With reference to the questionnaires filled in by children, there is some scope for hope in the fact that they thought the motor-disabled were the easiest to accept in principle. Thus it can be expected that when children with motor-disabilities participate in mainstream education in large numbers theoretical acceptance will be an easy daily practice.

Further research tasks

During the research I had to constantly confront the issue of how many more questions should have been raised or, better put, that a control group should have been set up, more should have been read and processed… a never finishing task. Obviously not all the ideas are adequate or necessary to implement. There is, however, one field in which I consider the research must continue, namely a representative survey should be conducted to observe and statistically show whether integration or segregation in education is more effective. This, however, cannot be executed in a short period of time by one person. A few years time, when enough experience is available with regard to integration, it would be important to conduct a comparative study involving a high number of questionees from the participating countries in order to explore the performance, academic level and social relationships of children with similar special needs, both in segregated and mainstream education. Such an investigation would definitely have a result in terms of further orientation and reaching an objective opinion.

Recommendation

In order that accepting difference would not cause a problem for anyone, and everyone would be able to accept anyone without prejudice and discrimination, I would recommend the application of the Spanish pattern to the Hungarian authorities, organisations and enterprises in question. I think that in Hungary something similar to the idea of the Spanish Federation of the Blind or the blind themselves - selling lottery tickets. I am convinced that many people with special needs would be able to sell bus, lottery or theatre tickets as well as anybody else. It is especially fortunate if those concerned had a share of the income. But even if this is not implemented, the more people with special needs who are encountered in many places and everyday situations, the less wonderment there would be. Even free theatre tickets may contribute to increasing equal opportunities in the cultural field. There is much to do to change the attitude of people. In order to do that it would be important to involve psychologists in education and to have mental-hygienic training courses to help everyone who requires it. However much integration is considered a trend to be followed, no positive experience can be expected as long as adults do not change and show a positive example for their children to follow.

Everyone takes his full place in society in the quality and condition he exists or has to exist. Therefore, there is a need to change the attitude of people and also make operative steps in order that existing facilities and job opportunities would be provided for those who require help and are in need. Conditions and opportunities must also be created in society which would promote a full life for everyone living with a disability, so that integration and later inclusion could be implemented both in education and at a social level.