

Inclusive basic art education and its expressive-formative potential for the pupils' development with special educational needs

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Abstract: Basic art education has an important, conventional place in our school system. Questions: Should the art education be understood as an integral part of the school system or is it just a free-time activity are rather out of questions. What are the conditions of integration at ZUS schools in comparison with conventional schools? – This question was studied by us within the investigation survey in autumn 2010. However, a more significant question suggests itself: Is it necessary at all to prepare inclusive conditions in such specified education type as the basic art education is? What above-standard benefit is represented by ZUS schools for pupils with specific education needs? Is the integration in conditions of basic art education possible at all? We are going to answer these questions in further text.

Key words: Basic art education, inclusive education, expressive-formative potential, pupils with special educational needs

1 Introduction

Basic art education has an important, conventional place in our school system. The importance of this education is indisputable, however, sometimes called into question. Questions: Should the art education be understood as an integral part of the school system or is it just a free-time activity are rather out of questions. Fortunately, the Frame Educational Programme of the basic art education was approved in 2010 and thus the placement of the elementary schools of art was confirmed in the Czech school system. Thus the danger of the quality decrease of the art education was turned away, to which it would probably come in a contrary case. The interest in this education type from the side of pupils and their parents proves mainly the significant (and

further growing) percentage of educated pupils in Elementary Schools of Art (ZUS) regarding the population in the age from 6 up to 19. E. g. in 2005 it was 12.8% and in 2009 already 15.9%. Out of this data results (the nowadays accepted) necessity not only to maintain the present level of the basic art education, but also the necessity to adapt this education according to the new education needs, especially in the perspective of the inclusive education.

What are the conditions of integration at ZUS schools in comparison with conventional schools? – This question was studied by us within the investigation survey in autumn 2010, where we took the ZUS schools of Zlin Region as the survey complex. This survey results were alarming. The percentage of integrated pupils in ZUS is considerably lower than the percentage of integrated pupils in schools of conventional types.

However, a more significant question suggests itself: Is it necessary at all to prepare inclusive conditions in such specified education type as the basic art education is? What above-standard benefit is represented by ZUS schools for pupils with specific education needs? Is the integration in conditions of basic art education possible at all? We are going to answer these questions in further text.

2 Partial Results of Integration in ZUS Schools of Zlin Region

In Autumn 2010 the questionnaire survey was provided which was aimed in integration of pupils with specific education needs in ZUS schools of Zlin Region. As a survey complex all the ZUS schools of Zlin Region were chosen. Questionnaire returnability was 63%, what in absolute value is 17 (out of total amount 27 ZUS schools in Zlin Region). – Thus, this specimen is regarded by us as sufficiently valid and the survey results provable. For its evaluation the percentage expression by the help of commented charts with a simple description and categorization was used.

The survey purpose was to study the problems of integration of pupils with specific education needs at ZUS in brief as the reaction for the trends rising from the new Frame Education Programmes for ZUS, especially from Chapter 12, where it is stated that it is the “basic art education opened to pupils with specific education needs. In case such pupils prove necessary presumptions required for their admission to the chosen art branch, such conditions must be created by the school which enable them regarding their educational possibilities and needs to fulfil the education content set up by the school...”¹. Within the framework of the survey we wanted to find out especially:

¹ Comp. e. g. MÜLLER, O.; VALENTA, M: *Psychopedy*. Praha: Party, 2003. ISBN 80-7320-063-5., POLINEK, M. D., VALENTA, M., MÜLLER, O. *Theatre-therapy in Institutional Education*. Olomouc:

- a) Whether (to what extent and in which branches) the pupils with special education needs are being educated at ZUS schools of the Zlin Region.
- b) What are the ideas of particular ZUS schools about the necessary study presumptions for the admission of pupils with specific education requirements.
- c) What are the obstacles for the integration of these pupils from the side of ZUS schools.

Out of the survey results following facts have been found out:

Ad a)

The ratio of the integrated pupils at ZUS schools of the Zlin Region represents almost one percent of all the educated pupils (see the Chart 1), what is an alarming finding already from two basic viewpoints:

1. In comparison with the ratio of the integrated pupils at primary schools the pupils at ZUS schools are far below the average, on top of that it is overcome significantly by the percentage ratio of the integrated pupils at secondary schools and kindergartens. (Compare Chart 1 and Chart 2).
2. Out of the professional, empirically proven knowledge on the education of pupils with specific education needs comes out, that the so called expressive approach (taking various art kinds as a mean of an education-formative activity) becomes apparent as one of the most suitable variant of education and bringing up of particular pupils. ZUS schools bring in themselves an irreplaceable potential not only for inclusive approach but especially for an enhancement of the quality of life of the pupils with a health handicap, social and health disablement.²

Thanks to the above mentioned fact (Point 1) this education-formative potential of ZUS is not utilized completely.

Chart 1

ratio of integrated pupils with special educational needs at the art school of the Zlin Region for school year 2009/2010

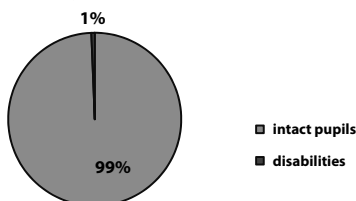
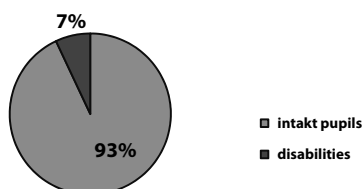


Chart 2

ratio of integrated pupils with special educational needs in primary schools in the Czech Republic for the school year 2009/2010

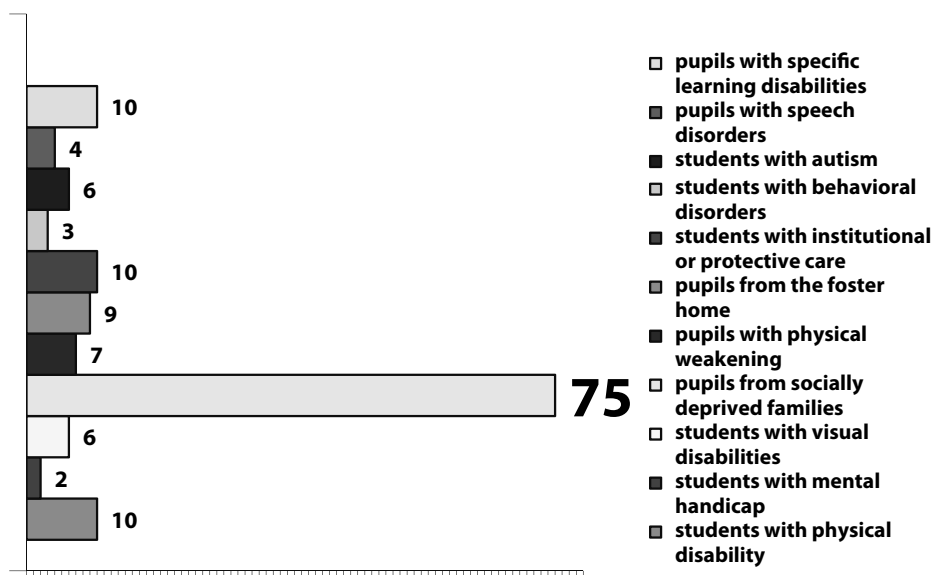


UP, 2010. ISBN 978-80-2442659-4., MÜLLER, O. *Therapy in Special Pedagogy*. Olomouc: UP, 2005. ISBN 80-244-1075-3. and others.

² The number data state the absolute frequency of integrated pupils at ZUS of the Zlin Region.

Structure of the integrated pupils in ZUS schools of the Zlin Region (Chart 3) shows, that there are great differences in frequency of the integrated pupils with a various handicap type. E. g. pupils with a hearing impairment are not integrated at all (which can be assigned to the necessity of specific communication with them and also because the most frequent art branch – regarding the number of educated pupils is a music branch). Pupils with physical disability are integrated more frequently than the pupils with mental handicap, even though the absence of the wheelchair access is stated as one of the obstacles by the majority of surveyed schools. Out of that it can be deduced that inconvenient area (material) conditions represent a far less obstacle than the professional unpreparedness of teachers. Out of the survey results comes out that pupils with various handicap types have not got equal opportunities for education at ZUS schools of the Zlin Region.

Chart 3³
numbers of integrated students at the art school with various types of disabilities



ad b)

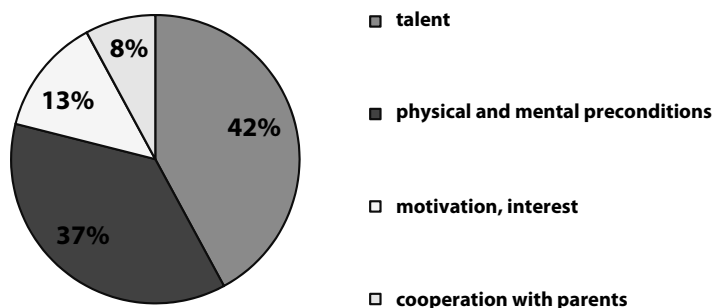
What concerns the concept of ZUS schools of the Zlin Region on the necessary study requirements for the admission of a pupil with specific education needs, relative low-threshold in regards to the specific needs is being shown. They do not differ too much

³ Output indicators 2009/10 – C Chapter [online] 10. 2. 2011 [cit. 10. 2. 2011]. Attainable at World Wide Web: <http://www.uiv.cz/clanek/726/2026#>.

from the study presumptions of intact pupils (see Chart 4). In case it is necessary the school fee is reduced by schools or it is cancelled by them entirely.

Though, in many cases the school fee reduction is not the cardinal presumption for the education at ZUS schools. (It means the school fee is not modified frequently even though the pupil is integrated). The physical, mental and social presumptions for education in the given branch are a certain limit here. We assume that much of that arises rather from the non-acquaintance of suitable methods, compensation tools, etc. As the matter of fact remains that the gift (talent) is the most important precondition for the admission at ZUS school similarly as of the intact pupils. – Here is quite a high rate of inclusivity and so the threshold is being lowered for the admission from the side of pupils with specific education needs themselves. It means that the specific needs of the pupil arisen out of his disablement do not need to be a crucial obstacle for admission into particular art branches at ZUS schools.

Chart 4
the admission of pupils with special educational needs in the art school



ad c)

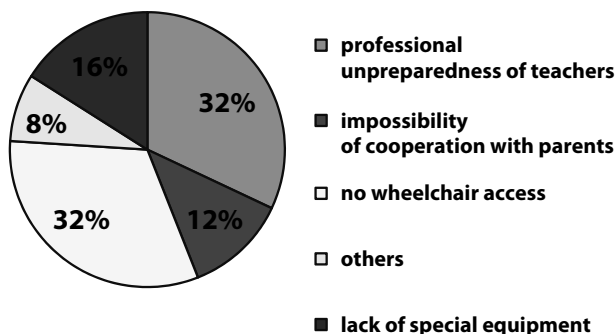
As the **basic obstacles for education of pupils with specific education needs** the following is being stated by pedagogues of ZUS schools of the Zlin Region (see Chart 5):

1. Professional unpreparedness of pedagogues in the sense of unfamiliarity with the base of specific pedagogy (that means of elementary specifics of particular disablement kinds and work methods with them).
2. Many schools are not barrier-free.

Out of these two obstacles the first one is regarded by us as more important one. As stated above even though the pupils with physical handicap (that means those ones with the highest demands for barrier-free passages) are being educated in higher extent than pupils with for example mental defects or hearing impairment. Thus the

necessity of creation of an education module is being shown, which would bring the basic knowledge from the field of specific pedagogy to ZUS school pedagogues.

Chart 5
barriers to integration at the art school



3 Inclusive Attitude of ZUS Schools in CR

In the final part of this article we are going to discuss the importance of the basic art education for pupils with specific education needs. Naturally, the efficiency of this potential depends mainly on the inclusivity rate from the side of ZUS schools themselves. Within the framework of the Czech education system the inclusive trend is obvious and the questions: How? How better? With what concept? What possibilities?... etc. are actual. It seems that the question: Whether at all? – for the common schools has already been answered positively.

We wanted to know whether it is the same also within the Elementary Schools of Art. In 2012 we have tied up to the research of integration at ZUS in the Zlin Region (see above) and a partial study of this trend within ZUS in CR has been provided by us ... and the results of this survey were also rather definite.

The aim of the survey was to find out the “integration activities” in the selected ZUS from the whole CR. As the method for the school selection a stratific random selection was used where one Elementary School of Art from each regional town or its year-end report for year 2010/2011 was chosen by random selection. Though the year-end reports of the chosen ZUS schools served us as the basis for the data collection. Their number was identical with amount of regions (14). We have used the year-end reports as they are a representative document of the school and it summarizes completely the school activities in the given school year. We wanted to know what information towards the integration are included in these reports. We were aimed concretely in:

- Number of integrated pupils with specific education needs (resp. handicapped and disabled ones) in an education form whatsoever (individual integration, integrated class, individual education plan, etc.).
- Cooperation with institutions belonging to the care system for people with specific education needs.
- Further training of pedagogy workers towards their competence enhancement within the integration (e.g. social-pedagogy education).
- Further activities and projects of the school towards the inclusive education.

By the analysis of the above mentioned documents the following was found out by us:

1. Total number of pupils of all the surveyed schools (14 schools in particular regional towns: 8527 (in average 568 for one school)
2. Number of integrated pupils: **1** ... that means **0,010% out of the total number of pupils** in the surveyed ZUS schools.
3. Cooperation of ZUS schools with institutions in the framework of care for persons with specific education needs: **One school** states the cooperation with specialised schools and with school consultancy institutions (PPP, SPC) and the Institution of Specific Pedagogy Study at PdF UP.
4. No further education of pedagogy workers for their competence enhancement within the integration was found out.
5. Only one school performs further activities directed to inclusive basic art education (it was a regular integration theatre-therapeutic workshop repeated every year and a creation of a model concept of inclusive basic art education inclusively the systematic training of pedagogues in this branch in a form of a project within the framework of ESF – equal opportunities).

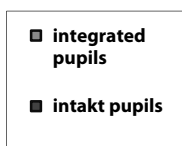
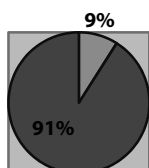
Integration Activities of ZUS Schools in CR Recorded in Their Year-end Reports for the School Year 2010/2011 – List of the Survey Results.

number of analysed year-end reports	14
total number of pupils in the surveyed ZUS schools	8 527
average number of pupils in one ZUS school	568
number of integrated pupils	1
percentage ratio of integrated pupils	0,01
cooperation of ZUS school with institutions	1 from 14
training of pedagogues towards integration	0
further activities towards inclusivity	1 from 14

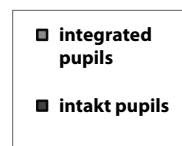
<http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/vzdelavaci-soustava>

Comparison of percentage ration of integrated pupils in 2010/2011 at Primary Schools and surveyed ZUS schools

integration at the primary school 2010/2011



integration in the annual reports 2010/2011 at the art school



Though these sad and alarming data must be taken relatively. One must realize we have analysed just the content of selected year-end reports. In comparison with the above mentioned integration survey at ZUS school in Zlin Region where a questionnaire was used for the data collection we have acquired more exact and little bit less alarming data.

When considering that the year-end report is a somehow summarizing and representative document and if we suppose that there are some integrated pupils at ZUS school (as proven by the survey in the Zlin Region), we can polemize whether the inclusive education is an important phenomenon.

What the Ministry of Education concerns, the situation is even sadder. There are no statistics on integrated pupils regarding the basic art education. ZUS schools fell out from the graphic depiction of the Czech education system in the official web sides of the Ministry of Education², also the proposals from the side of the ministry for the saving measures are being criticised within the framework of which it would come to such re-organisation of the basic art education that this education would not only be locked up for many pupils (school fee increased by up to 100%), but also it could endanger the existence of some ZUS schools at all.

1. At present the basic art school system battles with issuing of school education programmes on the basis of the Framework Education Programme for basic art education. – What can be understood also as an effort to “excuse” its (nowadays disputed) place in the Czech education system.

We can assume that after this priority task has been managed the attention will be devoted also to the pupils with specific education needs, resp. to the inclusive approach within the basic art education. Besides that, the Frame Plan of Education for the basic art education contains a chapter (being just marginal) dealing with education of pupils with specific education needs. – The chapter content refers just formally

to the § 16 of School Act and to the Public Notice No. 73/2005 of the Digest on the education of pupils with specific education needs. We should believe that these up-to-now formal inclusive tendencies will grow up in a real need of the elementary art school system and that they will not become just a mere vision in the perspective of battle of the elementary art schools for their own survival.

4 Expressive-formative Potential of ZUS Schools

Already the name itself appears as a paradox at the first sight: In case we speak about the expressive-formative potential we mean the potential of expressive-formative therapy. The psycho-therapeutic intervention does not match to the school milieu, though. If we understand the therapies in special pedagogy in wider extent (compare Müller, 2005; Růžicka in Valenta, 2009 etc.) also the preventative-bringing up (being the secondary one) effect of the approach can be included here rising out of the expressive therapies, which can be applied in a certain extent within the educational-bringing up process at ZUS schools.

In other words: Research and empiricism in the field of expressive therapy application have proven that the art, besides its art potential has also the potential to affect the behaviour, psychical getting through, attitudes, and others. – So it can become a very important mediator in communication with the world and the individual themselves with their mental, sensorial and body handicap or social impairment.

We can state that the art activity of individuals with specific education needs brings a certain secondary therapeutic-formative (or integration) effect. For example the experience within the phenomenon Outsider Art where the art is being produced by artists with handicap is proving that these artists improve their quality of life in various fields by the help of their art works. This statement is proven also by the research of theatre-therapy, where the so called Paradox of the theatre-therapeutic aiming was described (Polínek, Valenta, Müller 2010, p. 103): “The art aiming of the theatre-therapy fulfils and strengthens its therapeutic-formative aims”. The theatre-therapists and actors (clients) take their activity as a specific kind of art and simultaneously describe their other added value than the artistic one – self-confidence increase, extension and improvement of social contacts, communication, etc.

Within the education of individuals with specific needs at ZUS schools we do not endeavour after psychic-therapeutic acting but it is obvious that the art creation has an impact for the quality of their lives undoubtedly. In the framework of the mentioned research of theatre-therapy it was proven that the higher quality of approach to the artistic goals and also the quality of therapeutic-formative effects was reached secondarily. At ZUS schools professional pedagogues work who are often not just very good artists but also excellent method specialists and educators.

It is not enough to be ascertained that the inclusive basic art education makes sense but it is also necessary to outline the steps leading for elimination of this sad situation at present. Such measures should be provided in order to increase the percentage ratio of education of pupils with specific education needs at ZUS schools in order the pupils with different kinds of handicap and impairment have equal opportunities for education.

5 Conclusion

For the above mentioned creation of a complex frame methodology of inclusive education of pupils with specific education needs at ZUS schools can help. This methodology must be created on the basis of evaluation of the education module for pedagogues of ZUS schools which should provide them with basic knowledge from the branch of specific pedagogy and which would be aimed in utility of proceedings of expressive approach in education and bringing up (that means mainly the knowledge from theatre-therapy, music-therapy, dance-therapy and art-therapy). The pedagogues trained this way should become a basic unit in the system of supervisions and mentoring of integration at ZUS schools, the frame structure of which would be also an integral part of the advised methodology.

Further it is necessary to prove the module of the whole-year education of pupils with specific needs at the ZUS schools in a pilot project and the experience gathered this way should be worked in into the above mentioned methodology. Purposeful and efficient cooperation with special schools and consultancy institutions in the given field should be tied up. And mainly meaningful, targeted and methodically maintained cooperation with parents (resp. legal representatives) of pupils with specific education needs should be tied up.

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