

The development of haptic and tactile perception in individuals with visual impairment

(book review)

FINKOVÁ, Dita. *Rozvoj hapticko-taktilního vnímání osob se zrakovým postižením*. 1. vyd. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2011. 119 s. Monografie. ISBN 978-80-244-2742-3.

Reviewed by Tereza Treflíková

Visual impairment is considered to be one of the most severe health disabilities by the general society. It is an important determinant of the development and the formation of the personality and has a crucial impact on the possibilities of education and socialisation of visually-impaired people.

Tactile perception is of paramount importance to visually-impaired individuals. It is not possible to acquire the same amount of good quality information using other compensatory senses: the hearing, the smell and the taste. It may be stated that this sense to a great extent replaces the missing visual perception in visually-impaired individuals.

A systematic training of touch is the core theme of the publication called "The development of haptic and tactile perception in individuals with visual impairment". The book was published and printed by the Palacky University in Olomouc in 2011. Its author, Dita Finková, is a docent at the Institute of Special Education Studies of the Faculty of Education at the Palacky University in Olomouc, a special pedagogue and typhlopedic, author of a range of articles and publications in the fields of special education and typhlopedy. The monography is the first print.

The publication is divided into nine chapters providing a general overview on the issue of visual impairment. The first chapter outlines the historic background on the care for a visually-impaired individual, it focuses on the personage of Louise Braille and describes significant historic events leading to the formation of a writing system for the blind. The second chapter deals with the classification of visually-impaired

people. The text that follows describes the unique role of touch in the lives of these individuals; the author lists the forms and ways of tactile perception, addresses the issue of its development and emphasises the importance of typhlographics. The fourth chapter introduces the methodology of Braille writing and reading education, describes the process in children of pre-school and school age, in individuals with late sight loss and deaf-blind persons. The fifth chapter offers a comprehensive overview of knowledge about Braille writing for the visually-impaired, characterises its features and addresses the specifics of using the Braille code in various world languages. In the sixth chapter the author characterises typhlotechnics. She classifies aids for the visually-impaired individuals according to the areas of their use: spatial orientation and independent movement aids, house aids, Braille reading and writing aids and aids for their study and education. The seventh chapter focuses on the area of education of individuals with visual and multiple disabilities. The author presents a summary and characteristics of essential documents dealing with the educational process in the Czech Republic and defines two basic forms of education of children, pupils and students with visual impairment: education in the form of integration and education in special schools designated to the visually-impaired pupils. In the eighth chapter, the author presents a summary and basic characteristic of selected organisations offering services to the visually-impaired individuals. These are Early-Care Centres, Special Education Centres and the Czech Blind United (Sjednocená organizace nevidomých a slabozrakých). The final, ninth chapter, is devoted to art therapy as a means of the development of individuals with severe visual impairment.

The respective chapters are systematically, logically and clearly structured. Each chapter starts with a short introduction into the area. The publication is supplemented with photographs and interesting links in order to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the issues. The book, written in scholarly language, is primarily intended for students of special education, typhlopedics, special educators and psychologists. However, people with visual impairment and their relatives may also benefit from reading the book.

Mgr. Tereza Trefilíková
Institute of Special Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
Žižkovo nám. 5
771 40 Olomouc
Czech Republic
e-mail: tereza.trefilikova@seznam.cz