Editors Nikoleta Gutvajn Milja Vujačić

CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



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OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Editors Nikoleta Gutvajn Milja Vujačić

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CONTENTS

7	Nikoleta	Gutvajn	and	Milja	Vujači	Ć

Foreword

Tinde Kovač-Cerović, Dragica Pavlović-Babić, Tijana Jokić, Olja Jovanović and Vitomir Jovanović

First comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in Serbia: selected findings

31 Lidija Miškeljin

Inclusiveness of preschool education within the documents of education policies of the Republic of Serbia

49 Milja Vujačić, Rajka Djević and Nikoleta Gutvajn

An examination of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education

63 Janez Drobnič

How students with special needs should be educated

77 Vanja Riccarda Kiswarday and Tina Štemberger

Attitude towards inclusion: an important factor in implementing inclusive education

89 Isidora Korać

Preschool teachers' perception of professional training contribution to the development of competences in the field of inclusive education

Olivera Gajić, Milica Andevski, Spomenka Budić and Biljana Lungulov Inclusion of socially marginalized individuals in the light of human rights education

119 Nikola Baketa and Dragana Gundogan

Inclusion of the Roma in Croatia and Serbia: the institutional framework and its implementation

137 Branislava Popović-Ćitić and Lidija Bukvić

The symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems in older primary school students

153 Ignazia Bartholini

Bullying and strategies for confronting the phenomenon in Italian schools

173 Tatjana Novović

The concept of inclusive education in the master's degree curriculum in Montenegro

183 Vedrana Marković

Inclusive education of visually impaired students in music schools in Montenegro

195 Milica Marušić

The career cycle of teachers according to their motives of professional choice: a comparison of general and special schools

207 Authors' biographies

213 Authors' index

FOREWORD

nsuring conditions for a quality education for all children is a key goal that is supposed to be achieved within the process of reforming the education system. Efforts to ensure both equality and quality in education have become fully made through the idea of inclusive education. The importance of this concept has also been confirmed by the fact that inclusive education in many countries represents a key indicator of the quality, efficiency and humanity of their education systems. Experiences so far in the application of inclusive education have been very valuable, because they point out some important elements of this process and provide guidelines regarding the manner in which those necessary changes should take place. It is important to highlight that it is impossible to develop one unique inclusive model that could be applied in various countries with the same level of success, but that adequate solutions can be only achieved by analyzing specific contextual conditions, taking into consideration the specificities of each social and cultural environment and the existing conditions of education systems and schools. In order for this idea to be actually implemented, it is important that decisions regarding public policies be based on insights obtained through careful research of various problems in the field of inclusive education. Those insights can be very significant both for decision-makers and practitioners in considering the process and results of the implementation of inclusive education as well as in getting ideas for further development of inclusive practices in educational institutions. It is possible to single out two approaches to the research and perception of inclusive education based on the different interests of researchers. The first approach is about searching for practical solutions to certain problems of inclusive education (a partial reform of the education system and schools), while the other approach perceives inclusion as a cultural policy that requires complete reconstruction of society and a new way of thinking.

Research in this field shows that, in spite of great efforts and endeavours to improve this idea, the inclusive education implementation process in most countries develops slowly and with difficulties. There are still many unresolved issues and dilemmas related to this process: (a) In what way is inclusive education related to key challenges in education such as quality, failing classes, lack of resources, rigidity of school programmes? (b) Is inclusive education the right solution for all children with developmental disabilities? (c) Is there is a best solution for the successful application of an inclusive programme and is there a clear plan to be followed? (d) Is the introduction of inclusive education possible in all countries?

The results show that official education policies in this field haven been completely implemented in practice and that existing differences can be explained by the existence of numerous barriers and challenges relating to the practical application of planned changes. Overcoming existing problems has not yet been fully solved, even in countries that have a long tradition of inclusive education and good economic conditions for its implementation, and it is clear that challenges and problems which developing countries encounter, having less experience in this field and unfavourable economic conditions, are bigger and more complicated.

Education policies in the field of inclusive education can be successfully implemented in practice if the key actors in this process (principals, teachers, students, and parents), strongly support planned changes and express a positive attitude towards them. Research shows that the resistance and negative attitudes of teachers and other stakeholders towards the inclusion of children from marginalized groups in regular schools lead to numerous problems in the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore highlighted that changing attitudes is one of the challenges and key conditions for the success of this process. Changing and overcoming negative attitudes towards inclusive education is progressing very slowly and with difficulty, and that is why many other planned activities in this field encounter difficulties in the process of realization.

The problems in the application of inclusive education to a great extent relate to teachers, as key actors in this process. Research shows that the successful development of inclusive practice is particularly obstructed by teachers' negative self-assessment of their professional competency for the realization of inclusive education, as well as a lack of adequate professional training and expert support in working with students who need additional support. These problems cause teachers who work in inclusive contexts to become overwhelmed and stressed, which additionally affects their work negatively. Modern educational approaches show the importance of the new role of teachers in establishing the required conditions for encouraging the individual development of children and recognizing their individual abilities, affinities, family and cultural heritage. Therefore, adequate professional training of teachers for working in inclusive education, the implementation of innovative approaches in work, and cooperation with parents has been highlighted as one of the most important goals in the process of adapting education to meet the abilities and needs of all children.

Research indicates that, apart from the conditions of education systems, the achievement of inclusive education is hindered by numerous barriers, including social and local community factors, as well as the those relating to children who need additional support and their families. Therefore in considering key challenges and perspectives of inclusive education, barriers and problems should not only be tackled within the education system, but also in connection with other segments of society, such as the family, local community, as well as healthcare and social security.

A collection of papers "Challenges and Perspectives of Inclusive Education" contains thirteen papers by authors who are, by their thematic orientation, focused on elaborating on numerous issues significant for inclusive education. This book aims to examine current problems in inclusive education from the standpoint of their significance for the improvement of public policies and the practice of inclusive education. No theoretical and stylistic harmonization was required from authors of the articles. They were expected to show the results of their own theoretical and empirical research, thus making them accessible to both an academic audience and the wider public, in the hope that the results of such scientific research will be implemented to a greater extent in educational practice.

This collection of papers addresses certain questions of inclusive education, but it does not give a comprehensive account of all aspects of inclusive education. We thought that it was important to publish and present in a single collection papers by authors who are dedicated to examining inclusive education from various perspectives. Papers contain relevant information about the current conditions of inclusive education in Serbia; dominant discourses of inclusive education within legal frameworks of preschool education in Serbia; the connection between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implicit pedagogies; attitudes of school counsellors towards the education of students with special needs; preschool teachers' competences for working in inclusive education; preschool teachers' opinions about the benefits of professional development in improving competences in the field of inclusive education; possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional environment and the local community in the context of education for human rights; institutional foundations for the inclusion of Roma people in the education system in Serbia and Croatia; frequency of symptoms of emotional and behavioural problems of older primary school students, with an analysis of gender differences, in the presence of symptoms and students' perception and assessment of the influence of difficulties on their own functioning; inclusive support in preventing bullying in the Italian education system; higher education programmes for teacher training in Montenegro and problems inhibiting improvements in inclusive education in music schools, with suggested solutions for their solution; characteristics of career development for various types of teacher in regular and special education systems.

The paper authored by Tinde Kovač-Cerović, Dragica Pavlović-Babić, Tijana Jokić, Olja Jovanović and Vitomir Jovanović *First comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in Serbia: selected findings*, presents selected findings of the first comprehensive evaluation of inclusive education in Serbia, five years after its systemic introduction. This evaluation is based on indicators defined by the Framework for monitoring inclusive education in Serbia. The research was conducted

9

on a representative sample of 28 schools, and it encompassed 1537 students, 794 parents and 742 teachers. The structure of the framework, which implies predefined indicators and criteria, as well as the assessment of that same indicator by various informants, enabled the identification of the areas which are strong points in our education system, as well as areas that require immediate system development. The results of the monitoring constitute a reliable basis for improving the policy and practice of inclusive education in Serbia.

In the paper *Inclusiveness of preschool education within education policies documents of the Republic of Serbia*, Lidija Miškeljin deals with an analysis of relevant legislative documents with the aim of showing that theoretical starting points interwoven with public policies discourse perceive a child differently, as well as inclusion itself thus bearing different implications for the practice of preschool education. A key question from which the author starts her analysis of the legislative framework is: What are the dominant discourses in legislative solutions for preschool education in Serbia and what kind of construction of inclusion do they offer? This paper uses one method of theoretical analysis implementing the technique of content analysis through the following dimensions: accessibility, employees, monitoring and evaluation, and management and financing. Based on the given criteria and categories we can observe that: children's rights remain at the level of political proclamation because they are not operationalized through the participation of children in education guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child; that reducing inclusion to a separate single consideration (such as the scope of children) becomes its own goal and displays particularity in understanding and recognition of inclusion; and that the concept of inclusion itself in documents of public policy is not based on a clear ideology because of existing terminological inconsistencies.

The results of the research aimed at examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education were presented and analyzed by Milja Vujačić, Rajka Djević and Nikoleta Gutvajn in their paper *An examination of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.* What distinguishes this research from similar studies in Serbia is its examination of the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their implicit pedagogies. The authors offer an account of key results of related research published both in our country and worldwide and recommend how to create further research on teachers' attitudes, which would lead to a more comprehensive and detailed consideration of this important variable, on which the quality of application of inclusive education depends to a great extent. A basic conclusion of this research is that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are moderately positive. The research has shown that there is a connection between teachers' implicit pedagogies and their attitudes towards inclusion, that is, the closer teachers' implicit pedagogies are to the contemporary education paradigm the more positive their attitudes towards inclusion are.

In the paper *How students with special needs should be educated*, Janez Drobnič shows that special schools can be seen as an opportunity to ensure the right to education for students with special needs, while on the other hand, they imply inequality in education because of students' exclusion from conventional learning environments provided to other students. Considering the fact that school counsellors' task is to help the integration of students with special needs, the

author conducted research on school counsellors' attitudes towards the education of students with special needs, in particular as to where such education should take place. One hundred and one school counsellors from primary, secondary, and special schools in Slovenia were included in the quantitative study. The prevailing opinion of counsellors in schools shows that they prefer the partial model of inclusive education, as they support all students – including those with special needs – being offered education in ordinary schools and classrooms, with the exception of students with learning difficulties. This suggests that we should seek new solutions for modern schools, in particular the education of all teachers for inclusive teaching in a classroom where all students are allowed to be different and individual, rather than being dealt with in two categories: students with special needs and others. This also means that we should revise education curricula and training for all teachers.

In the paper Attitude towards inclusion: an important factor in implementing inclusive education, Vanja Riccarda Kiswarday and Tina Štemberger focused on preschool teachers' inclusive competences. The research, in which 124 preschool teachers were included, aims to establish how they value and assess their competences for inclusion, whereby competences are understood on three levels: attitude, knowledge, and skills. The authors also checked whether preschool teachers with longer work experience and those who had attended in-service training for inclusive settings assessed their inclusive competences higher than others with less experience did. The survey results indicate that preschool teachers see themselves quite competent for work in inclusive settings – they rated themselves high in all three dimensions of inclusive competences. It turned out that there are differences in the assessment of skills and knowledge: teachers with 10 - 20 years of service rated these dimensions higher, but no difference could be noticed between teachers in relation to inservice training for inclusive settings.

In the paper *Preschool teachers' perception of professional training contribution to the development of competences in the field of inclusive education*, Isidora Korać presented a segment of research whose goal was to examine teachers' opinions about the contribution of professional development in developing competencies in the field of inclusive education. The research was based on a questionnaire answered by a sample of 150 preschool teachers employed at preschool institutions in several towns in Serbia. The findings of the research show that the current concept of professional development accentuates the adoption of *ready-made decontextualized* knowledge, development of preschool teachers' competencies as individuals, without connecting individual and organizational changes that inclusion initiates. The author concludes that if we want for the system of professional development to contribute to obtaining preschool teachers' professional competencies for application of the current model of inclusive education, it is necessary to enable their greater participation and reflective practice via programmes for professional development. Inclusion is a change and a challenge for organizations in which various protagonists participate, who are supposed to interconnect from their various positions, roles and responsibilities, aiming for horizontal learning and organized action. Future programmes for professional development

in the field of inclusive education should be directed at the following areas: (a) working with gifted children (b) adapting work organization in preschool institutions in order to meet the needs of children who need additional support, (c) assessment and revision of individual education plans and (d) teamwork and cooperation in preschool institutions.

In the work *Inclusion of socially marginalized individuals in the light of human rights education*, Olivera Gajić, Milica Andevski, Spomenka Budić and Biljana Lungulov consider possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional framework and a local community in the context of human rights education. The authors consider the context of social inclusion and human rights education in order to collect qualitative indicators concerning the existing knowledge, interest, and recognition of social inclusion and human rights with the purpose of shedding light on this problem by protagonists of the education process, as well as the wider community, which forms the basis of strategic decisions and guidelines of education in a democratic society. Finally, the authors conclude that a well organized support network for workers in this area, who are required to ensure conditions for the fulfilment of human rights on the principles of accessibility, participation and equality.

Studying the Roma minority, which is one of the most economically and socially deprived minorities in Serbia and Croatia, is the focus of the paper *Inclusion of the Roma in Croatia and Serbia: the institutional framework and its implementation*, whose authors are Nikola Baketa and Dragana Gundogan. The goal of this paper is to show the institutional foundations for including the Roma people in the education system, as well as the way in which institutional foundations changed in the process of approximation to the European Union. On the basis of these insights it can be established that, despite the legal framework, there is a high level of exclusion in the education system so that this approach leads to the more difficult advancement of the Roma people within it dropping out, or deciding not to continue education, which in turn perpetuates the problem of education and the social position of the Roma people. The methodological approach of the authors included analysis of legislative documents and reports, as well as that of available statistical data about the education of the Roma minority.

In the paper *The symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems in older primary school students*, Branislava Popović-Ćitić and Lidija Bukvić have shown the results of the research on the frequency of emotional and behavioural symptoms in primary school students, with analysis of gender differences in the presence of symptoms and assessment of students' perception about the influence of difficulties on their own functioning. The data was obtained by means of a Strengths and difficulties questionnaire, a version for self-assessment of adolescents aged 11 to 16 with an addition about the influence of symptoms, on a sample of 630 students from 5 secondary schools in Belgrade. The obtained results were discussed in the context of considering the need for additional support, which, within an inclusive education system, would be provided for students with difficulties in their emotional and social development.

In the paper Bullying and strategies for confronting the phenomenon in Italian schools, Ignazia Bartholini starts with a review of literature about bullying, published since the 1970s to date. On the bases of the outcomes of some studies previously conducted, she aims to explain how the phenomenon of bullying has accompanied the raising of the period of mandatory school. Through the research of eminent scholars, she argues that the crisis of values and the loss of perspective for the future of teenagers increase the possibility of violent relationships among peers in school, where they spend much of their time. An interpretative model on bullying is therefore highlighted, using the "dramaturgic metaphor" of Goffman and focusing the role of viewer/witness (often the same classmates) in breaking the violent triangle where the perpetrator and victim are similarly victims of the same cruel play. Finally she describes the strategies devised by the Ministry of Education which are currently applied in schools in the Italian peninsula from the perspective of preventive and rehabilitative education, on potential protagonists - victim and bully - on spectators viewers - on all those adolescents who just look at the "violent drama" for fun or for weakness, without interrupting it and preventing a recurrence. In the light of empirical evidences, it is suggested that such programs accompanied by informal practices should be encouraged. The author suggests that after Italy another of the European nations that has invested very much in terms of support for inclusion and prevention for confronting the problem of bullying at school can be considered.

On the basis of recent structural and functional changes in the Montenegrin education system, with a special focus on the concept of inclusion, in her paper *The concept of inclusive education in the master's degree curriculum in Montenegro*, Tatjana Novović analyzes high school programmes for teacher training in Montenegro. Almost twenty years since the inclusive concept was implemented in the Montenegrin education system, with substantial changes in teaching practice and education legislation, the problem of vertical discontinuity in the system is still significant, i.e. there is a lack of coherence and compatibility between primary, secondary and tertiary education. The lack of a continual exchange of practical experiences and obtained knowledge about the benefits and marked challenges among all systemic institutional participants, creating a fluid field of inclusive context in Montenegro, induces discontinuity and actualises "old" questions about the purpose and functionality of previous courses of development of this concept in all education segments.

In her paper *Inclusive education of visually impaired students in music schools in Montenegro*, Vedrana Marković presents problems that complicate the improvement of inclusive education at music schools and offers some solutions. Musically talented children with visual impairment should be identified in time and have their music potential developed, i.e. they should be educated in music schools. It is often the case that blind and partially sighted children with musical talent acquire their musical education outside institutions, by private means, whereby they only dedicate themselves to learning how to play a selected instrument, but not to other courses which are envisaged in the elementary music school (solfeggio, music theory, choral singing, orchestra). This way of learning makes their music education incomplete. In addition to the primary goal – achieving a complete music education - there are numerous positive influences that happen through education in a music school.

The text written by Milica Marušić *The career cycle of teachers according to their motives of professional choice: a comparison of general and special schools*, is focused on the consideration of three groups of teachers, based on the dominant motives of their professional choice: realists, idealists and opportunists, with the aim of comparing characteristics of career development of those groups of teachers in regular and special education system. Results obtained by the use of a questionnaire (N=209) show that teacher *idealists* displayed the lowest level of career frustration, out of a total sample. It was concluded that the career development of *idealists*, *opportunists* and *realists* differ depending on the context in which they work: as regular school teachers, *opportunists* are more prone to withdrawal, while at special schools there is a stronger career frustration.

At the end of this foreword we would like to stress that our task was facilitated to a great extent by the readiness of all the authors to fulfill the requirements of the editor both in terms of the scope and structure of the papers. We hope that our gratitude will be a sufficient reward for the efforts they invested. We would like to thank the consulting editors, our distinguished colleagues Professor Nikolay M. Borytko, Professor Susana Padeliadu and Professor Marija Kavkler, whose suggestions significantly influenced the improved quality of the book. We owe a debt of gratitude to Milan Stančić, PhD, who patiently and dedicatedly helped us during all stages of preparation of this collection of papers. We are equally grateful to Rajka Djević, PhD, for her help and constructive suggestions, which significantly contributed to the quality of this collection of papers. We are also grateful to Mladen Radulović, MA, Branko Cvetić and Vlada Polić for their patience, professionalism and friendly understanding during the preparation of this manuscript.

Nikoleta Gutvajn and Milja Vujačić

HOW STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SHOULD BE EDUCATED

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Inclusive education became dominant at international level when it was included in the law of international institutions, like the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities², Salamanca Declaration³, etc. within the framework of the UN. In addition, we can say that it has become a "good thing" in itself, as is the case for democracy or human rights (Karsten & Beckem, 2012). However, the concept of inclusive education is rather vague (Norwich, 2013), so some theorists, when talking about this, prefer to talk about a variety of inclusions rather than one inclusion (Dyson, 1999).

Inclusive education at present takes place primarily in the context of three key questions: what, how, and where to teach students with special needs. This opens the question of the content of curricula, pedagogical approaches and strategies, and the space in which the learning would be carried out. Inclusion as a relatively new paradigm of education for students with special needs has its roots in the efforts of parents in particular who want to ensure that students are no longer excluded in special, isolated schools (Opara, 2005, 11), and to engage them in a "home school" because special schools are considered as exclusion from the basic social area. The initiatives to integrate did not assume that placement of students in schools would generate a completely new situation for learning and teaching, which necessarily raises the question of who should be taught in such an inclusive situation, and how the environment should be adapted to their needs.

The basic idea of inclusive schools is to provide a common education for all students, irrespective of their difficulties or differences. Therefore, the inclusive school suits different needs of students. Representatives of the individualistic/medical approach see disorder and disability among students as a problem of the individual. On the other hand, we have advocates of the social model that see individual student problems especially in maladjustment of the environment to the needs of the learner. The Salamanca statement

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² The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations.

³ In 1994, UNESCO organized an international conference to consider the "fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs." The Conference adopted the "Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action," known by shorthand as the Salamanca Declaration.

in the context of UNESCO in 1994 and in the wording of the phrase "wherever possible" indicates that the placement of each school-age child with special needs in the common room is difficult on both conceptual and the practical levels. The expression "wherever possible" leaves many uncertainties and opens the question of when and who can be placed in a common class and for whom special schools are reserved.

UNESCO (2004) Document on education of persons with special needs inevitably has an impact on the implementation of the inclusion principle around the world. However, this does not mean uniformity in views on how inclusive education should take place. Therefore, there are many differences, irrespective of the fact that this paradigm was good and well received, as it was introduced in the education policies of nation states (Norwich, 2013).

Therefore, the first question of our study is where to teach those who are defined as students with special needs, namely the issue of educational opportunity in terms of school and class. Another question, linked to the first one is: what are the appropriate strategies of teaching and learning within a single school environment. This issue concerns parents of students with special needs, school policy, experts, and academics. In our study we wanted to find out how counsellors in Slovenian schools see their role in the processes of providing "single school premises".

When students with special needs come together in a common class, fundamental division between special and normal schools, and thus the "normal" and the "special children" becomes irrelevant, so we face new categories and entities that follow an inclusive paradigm. This includes a common school space, diversity instead of difference, inclusion, educational assistance, and the like.

This raises issues and challenges for educators on how to manage the processes of teaching and learning, how to introduce new teaching strategies, and use of a greater diversity of methods and tools, since a rich spectrum of children's qualities and their needs is being established in a classroom. This means that the inclusion of students with special needs in ordinary class logically raises the questions of teacher training for inclusive schools and education, school leadership, a principal, etc., relevant to the research of an inclusive school.

SCHOOL SPECIALIZATION AS A WAY OF EXCLUSION

The principles of eliminating students from the common educational space can be very different, and are also associated with the process of specialization of schools. Special schools for children with specific disorders were something most problematic for parents and decades ago resulted in the efforts for integration and normalization. It is hard to claim that specialization was aimed at elimination and segregation as such, with all their consequences. It was just a rational way for students with special needs to achieve academic skills, and the effects of this orientation were dispayed in limited development of social skills, while on the level of rights it was shown as a restricted freedom and choice to integrate into a normal domestic social environment. These side effects are seen by some as "collateral damage" which appeared after a certain period and triggered inclusive processes in education.

Implementation of social inclusion in education is associated with the social model of disability, but is not carried out without problems. These problems partly arise from the historical role of education and inclusion as universal values. Sayed and Soudien (2003) claim that education was not only the issue of access and social mobility, but also of social selection, put in place through specialisation. Specialization of schools took place through different elements such as disability, special needs, nationality (language), children's age, ability. This was manifested as segregation, where the question was which specialization was actually disputable from the point of view of inclusion. Rix (2011: 275) argues that schools should be fully representative across all dimensions, not only along the axis of disabilities / disorders, and inclusive so as to go beyond the mere rhetoric expressions of welcoming diversity. Such a view is in fact closest to a full social approach to the education of students with disabilities. For Rix (ibid), specialization is most controversial on the criterion of nationality, less disputable on the basis of disabilities or special needs, and not disturbing at all as regards the age of the students.

Processes of inclusion are trying to reunite separated educational space. Therefore Slee (2008: 103) understands inclusive education as an attempt to destroy the dichotomy between regular and special education, being offered as a provocative concept of "irregular school" in order to draw attention to inconsistencies in establishing genuinely inclusive schools that are not exclusionary nor specialized; this is a different image from the one we see in current educational policy and practice (ibid).

We could say that special schools are the product of the system of differentiation and exclusion based on the organization of a special area and didactics as key conditions for the provision of learning goals for students with special needs. This type of specialization is only one of many that are taking place in the school system. Beside this one there is differentiation according to the ability and the learning achievements, as in the dual system

of primary education in Germany, Austria, or the level teaching in the last three years of elementary schools in Slovenia. This raises the question of integration and inclusion of students with special needs, as well as "others" at the local level, and in addition the key question is how to ensure true integration of students with special needs in the common learning area (general school), and which groups should be provided this type of integration within a specific school, group and class. This question still remains open.

THE SHIFT FROM THE CONCEPT OF THE DUALITY SCHOOL TO THE DIVERSITY SCHOOL

By implementing the paradigm of inclusion we are facing changes in the conception of school. The former approach to education was based on two separate educational places; the first one included general schools not available for students with special needs, and the second place was that of special schools. Each of these areas shaped its specific but nevertheless unique teaching approach which assumes that students in normal schools are not specific, they are similar and therefore subject to a single general curriculum and uniform teaching strategies geared towards an "average" student. In the second place there were special schools, organized according to the specific disorders of individuals (specialization according to disorders). The disorder was essentially the basic criterion for the placement of students in separate special schools. But even in special schools students are non-specific, and teachers have to use a different but uniform approach for this particular group.

The introduction of inclusion melts this duality, which is, according to the segregational way of thinking in both poles, understood as homogeneity, and replaces it with the concept of difference/diversity as the basis for a new teaching approach. This is characteristic for the social model of understanding inclusion and implies that it is the environment that must adapt to the new situation of diversity in the group, the classroom, and the school as a whole. A uniform school space becomes such only in the case of pure, consistent inclusion as advocated by the social model. In other cases, this duality remains in milder forms, while transitions between spaces in this case become significantly easier.

When talking about inclusive education, we often ignore the different 'diversities'; differences are overlooked in terms of who is included/excluded. This does not mean understanding that inclusion is seen in a kind of syntagm "one size fits all", because policy and practice can vary in relation to the spectrum of differentiation (Norwich, 2013: 96). Inclusion in its original definition implies students with special needs who have been clearly diagnosed with a disorder, mainly through psychological testing, but the current inclusive practice has gradually identified ever more "specific needs". An inclusive school

reveals other 'different' students in addition to the classic "disorders" or "disabilities". We can say that the process of inclusion encourages the discovery of new diversities in students, expressed through special needs due to emotional, national, linguistic, or other characteristics, even talents. This meant in total an increase in the number and proportions of students with special needs, and at the same time the creation of a new entity of school class - the class of differences.

The processes of transition from homogeneity to duality and then to diversity in the single school space, have taken place and and are taking place gradually. In the first stage, an inclusive school reflects a partial diversity dimension in a common school / classroom within two groups of students: one group consists of students with special needs placed in the classroom with others. This group of students with special needs is more diverse than the population in all former special schools, because new special needs are appearing here. The second group includes other "students with no special needs". This soft duality, or partial diversity in the pure social model is transformed into a comprehensive group with a variety of individuals in which gifted students are recognized as students with special needs. This represents a new perspective of looking at education and the requirements for different teaching strategies.

However, at the end of the day there is still a dilemma of how much the level of diversity still allows a bearable social life and how to cope with diversity and accept it. Lesar (2007: 14) stresses that in one or another way, diversity among people is often difficult to accept, but we often need a great deal of communication in order to avoid disagreements, discrimination, or exposure of certain groups of people.

METHODOLOGY

In order to find out the views of counsellors concerning inclusive education of counselling services in Slovenian schools, a study was carried out. Based on a random selection, 60 primary schools (PS), representing 13.4% of all primary schools in Slovenia; 50 secondary schools (SS) or 25.6% of all secondary schools; and 34 or 100% of schools for students with special needs (SPE) were invited to take part. The survey was carried out in cooperation with the Educational Research Institute in Ljubljana. The questionnaire was addressed to the schools' counselling services. Responses were received from 42 primary schools, i.e. their counselling services, from 30 special schools, and 29 secondary schools.

The questionnaire consisted of four sets of items. The first included questions about identification, the second questions about schooling of students with special needs, the third questions on vocational education and vocational orientation, and the fourth questions on vocational rehabilitation and employment.

The second part relating to the education of students with special needs was relevant for our study of inclusion. Counsellors responded by expressing their views (The Likert 5-point scale). The information derived from the survey was properly coded and entered into the computer application SPSS PASW-20.0.

RESULTS

Pursuant to regulations, the education of pupils with special needs in Slovenia is carried out in the common school (inclusive model), or in schools with special programmes (special school).

The first question we asked is what the respondents think about the education of pupils with special needs in Slovenia. This issue was structured in five statements - positions that respondents should express their opinion about. Table 9 shows the results of respondents to the first three positions set.

Table 1. Agreement of school counsellors with the statement
"Education of students with special needs in our country is well organized",
"How teachers are trained and equipped for teaching students with special needs", and
"How those students are ready for further education in a regular school"

						95% Conf. Interv. for Mean			
		N.I.	N.4	Std.	Std.	Lower	Upper	N Alice	N.4
		N	Mean	Dev.	Error	Bound	Bound	Min	Max
	PS	42	3.69	.950	.147	3.39	3.99	1	5
Education of students with special needs in our country is	SPS	30	3.23	.971	.177	2.87	3.60	2	5
well organized	SS	29	3.24	.912	.169	2.89	3.59	1	5
	Total	101	3.43	.963	.096	3.24	3.62	1	5
	PS	42	3.60	.912	.141	3.31	3.88	2	5
In our school we are qualified	SPS	30	4.47	.819	.150	4.16	4.77	2	5
and equipped for teaching students with special needs	SS	28	3.43	.920	.174	3.07	3.79	2	5
	Total	100	3.81	.982	.098	3.62	4.00	2	5
In the "regular school", students with special needs are better prepared for further education	PS	42	3.07	.778	.120	2.83	3.31	2	5
	SPS	30	1.83	.986	.180	1.47	2.20	1	4
	SS	29	3.07	.799	.148	2.77	3.37	2	4
than in special schools	Total	101	2.70	1.015	.101	2.50	2.90	1	5

Data showed a predominant agreement with the statement that "Education of students with special needs in our country is well organized" (M=3.24).

Table 2. Checking of statistically significant differences of counsellors' views

		Sum of	df	Mean	F	Cia
		Squares	uı	Square	Г	Sig.
Education of students with special needs in our country is well organized	Between Groups	5.040	2	2.520	2.817	.065
	Within Groups	87.653	98	.894		
	Total	92.693	100			
In our school we are qualified and	Between Groups	18.947	2	9.474	12.021	.000
equipped for teaching students with	Within Groups	76.443	97	.788		
special needs	Total	95.390	99			
Students with disabilities are better prepared for further education in the	Between Groups	32.275	2	16.137	22.332	.000
	Within Groups	70.814	98	.723		
"regular school" than in special schools	Total	103.089	100			

Differences in attitudes between the groups of counsellors are not statistically significant at a confidence level α =00:05.

In the second statement "In our school we are qualified and equipped for teaching students with special needs", we found a higher average level of agreement (M=3.81). But we also found statistically significant differences on these claims at a confidence level α =00:05 between the group of schools, which is more than full point (the difference value is 1.04), and all estimates are over the boundary between agreement and disagreement. The highest scores on "the education and equipment" at their school were marked by counsellors in special schools (M=4.47), which is basically in the range of "complete agreement". The lowest level of agreement with this statement was found in secondary schools (M=3.43), still representing more agreement than disagreement.

The largest difference of views between the "regular school" and special schools was found in the claim "Students with special needs are better prepared for further education". The difference between the counsellors in special schools on the one hand, and counsellors in primary and secondary schools on the other hand is 1.24 points. The average group statement of counsellors in primary and secondary schools is slightly higher than the median value between agreement and disagreement (M=3.07). Advisors in "special schools" for the most part do not agree with the statement, because the arithmetic mean value of their answers is below the value M=3 and amounts to only (M=1.83), which represents almost complete disagreement. Counsellors in primary and secondary schools moderately support the view that "regular schools" are better than special schools in preparing students with special needs for further education, while counsellors in special schools are contrary to this position, which implicitly means that students with special needs are better prepared for further education in special schools. Counsellors in special schools prefer "segregated" education for those students, while

counsellors in primary and secondary schools favour "normalization" of students with special needs, but not for all categories.

In order to find possible differences in the positions of advisers to the education of students with special needs in relation to the type of disorder, we have separated particular groups of students with mental disabilities.

Table 3. Attitudes of counsellors on three statements: inclusion of students with special needs in common schools, employment of these students, and whether students with special needs are inhibiting other students

						95% Co Me			
					Std.	Lower	Upper		
		N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Error	Bound	Bound	Min	Max
If students with mental	PS	42	2.19	.969	.149	1.89	2.49	1	4
disabilities attend regular schools, they will achieve better	SPS	30	1.67	.802	.146	1.37	1.97	1	4
results in terms of knowledge	SS	29	2.66	.857	.159	2.33	2.98	1	4
and personal growth than in special schools	Total	101	2.17	.960	.096	1.98	2.36	1	4
Students with special needs in regular schools are inhibiting learning results of other students	PS	42	1.93	.921	.142	1.64	2.22	1	4
	SPS	30	2.50	1.225	.224	2.04	2.96	1	5
	SS	29	2.14	.743	.138	1.86	2.42	1	4
	Total	101	2.16	.997	.099	1.96	2.36	1	5

As regards the placement of students with mental disabilities in education, there is a dominant view that it is better for them to attend special schools. This is approved by the findings concerning the claim "If students with mental disabilities attend regular schools, they will achieve better learning outcomes, such as in special education programs", where the majority position is against this statement (M=2.17): The counsellors in secondary schools show moderate disagreement to education of these students in regular schools (M=2,66), but advisers in special schools are seriously against the statement to include this category of students into common schools (M=1.67).

The differences between the positions of counsellors depending on the type of school are statistically significant at a confidence level $\alpha \le 0.05$. Counsellors from primary and secondary schools are implicitly more inclined towards the integration of students with mental disabilities in ordinary schools than advisors in schools with special programs that explicitly support the placement of these students in special schools. In accordance with their view, these students will gain more knowledge in special schools and such schools provide better personal growth for them.

Table 4. Statistical significance of differences in counsellor's attitudes regarding the education of students with special needs

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
If students with mental disabilities attend	Between Groups	14.444	2	7.222	9.109	.000
regular schools, they will achieve better results in terms of knowledge and personal	Within Groups	77.695	98	.793		
growth than in special schools	Total	92.139	100			
Students with special needs in regular schools inhibit learning results of other	Between Groups	5.731	2	2.866	2.996	.055
	Within Groups	93.734	98	.956		
students	Total	99.465	100			

We have also set a provocative statement: "Students with special needs in regular schools inhibit learning results of other students." This statement was rejected by all groups, but not completely (M=2.16). Closer to that position are counsellors from special schools (M=2.96) who presumably (at least most of them) do not have experience of work in usual schools. The sum of the advisers' answers: "agree" and "very much agree" is relatively high in special schools – as many as 23.4% agree that students with special needs inhibit the learning achievements of other (normal) students.

The next question "Where should students with special needs get education" (Table 5) shows that 2/3 of all respondents (66.7%) support the decision: "Students with mental disabilities⁴ enjoy better education in special schools than in regular schools".

Table 5. School counsellors and the question concerning education of students with special needs

Pupils with special needs should be educated	Counsellors in	Total			
		Primary schools	Special schools	Secondary schools	
		1	3	0	4
In special schools only	%	2,5%	10,0%	0,0%	4,0%
Students with mental disabilities in special training programmes, others in regular ones		28	18	20	66
		70,0%	60,0%	69,0%	66,7%
All without execution in regular schools	N	1	2	4	7
All, without exception, in regular schools	%	2,5%	6,7%	13,8%	7,1%
Other proposals		10	7	5	22
		25,0%	23,3%	17,2%	22,2%
Total	N	40	30	29	99
Total	%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

In European countries there is no common term for this category of persons with special needs. In Spain, they used the term intelectual disabled, the Netherlands and Swiss mentally hendicapped, in Germany intellectual disabled. (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

Among counsellors in all three groups of schools (primary, special, and secondary schools) there is a consensus on observations on "spatial" integration of students with special needs, since most (66.7%) hold the position that students with mental disabilities should be taught in special schools programs, and other students with special needs in regular programs. 7.1% of all counsellors support the statement "all without exception included in the normal school" (strict inclusion), which implicitly means the closure of all special schools. 4% of all surveyed advisors would include all students with special needs in special schools (strict dual schools).

School counsellors are more inclined towards an inclusive model of education of students with special needs, but not for all categories. Students with mental disabilities, in their majority opinion, should however remain in special education programs - in "special primary schools", while all the rest would be integrated into mainstream schools.

The above findings of the analysis of responses on the education of students with special needs show that the new paradigm of inclusive education in Slovenia is largely accepted by the school counselling services.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis showed that school counsellors in Slovenia support a partial inclusive model of integration of students with special needs. This raises some questions: the first one is the issue of appropriate inclusive teaching, therefore inclusive pedagogy, which means the use of appropriate teaching strategies and the necessity of teacher training for inclusive education. The second question concerns the necessary arrangements and adjustments to the school in terms of technical equipment and adaptations to school premises. The third question relates to the management and organization of inclusive schools that will be attended by a diversity of students in the classroom so that they achieve good academic knowledge and a high level of social skills.

Dealing with the practice of inclusive education raises some questions, namely: What pedagogical approach has been usable for students with disabilities and difficulties in ordinary classes? Is special education necessary for students with special needs or disabilities and difficulties? Which pedagogical approach is the most effective for the inclusion of students with special needs in the majority class?

When we speak of inclusive pedagogy we mean to identify, adapt, and meet the needs of students, where the emphasis is on all students. Because the school is open to all, we have so many "different" children amidst "normal" children. This recognition applies to those with disorders whose individual needs we satisfy, as well as to those who come from different communities or nationalities. Instead of duality in the classroom

where we had two separate groups - students with disabilities and the rest - we are now faced with a new entity of the school community: the state of diversity and the diversity of the students. This new entity must be taken through the appropriate inclusive education, which is a matter of an approach that recognizes kindness and welcomes all children, and also assumes that teachers appreciate the value of class diversity. It can also be found in the UNESCO (2004) expression "inclusive learning-friendly class". Therefore, in this context, we have highlighted the participation and removing of barriers to learning, which is in line with the social model of education, where the barriers are regarded primarily as the result of "disability" of social environmental factors. It is not good to abandon an individualistic approach that recognizes the disorder/disability as a pedagogical issue or question an individual's own personal limits and pains in the context of self-esteem.

The new entity of diversity, which replaced duality in Slovenian schools, assumes to have general teaching strategies adapted to individual needs in inclusive ordinary schools within the concept of "the range of teaching strategies". With the entry of students with disabilities into regular schools and taking the concept of diversity in each class, we opened the issue of additional knowledge, methods and techniques of teaching, which can be summarized in a conceptual connection "width and flexibility in the use of learning and teaching strategies". This raises the question of how to apply and put together all these elements in a successful teaching strategy.

Because certain approaches and tools are appropriate for some, but not for others (e.g. tactile images for pupils with blindness), in one case it means complementarities in terms of additional enhanced instructional opportunities (besides verbal, material models of teaching), but in the other option we see that some tools are appropriate for one group, but not for the other (Kermauner, 2015).

Scheme 1. The importance of knowledge and teaching strategies in inclusive schools

The teacher's ability for learning strategies (deficit)

Additional teacher/learning assistance

Additional teacher training

The range of diversification strategies necessary for learning in an inclusive classroom

This means a very flexible adaptation of teaching strategies in the specific learning situation and a greater degree of adaptation to different levels and types of problems in learning. These are adaptations of teaching strategies in the light of general or common, which could be called a kind of adaptation or specialized concentrated learning (Scheme 1). Lewis and Norwich (2004: 88) call this scheme "variation of teaching strategies." It is a method of teaching from low to high intensity, which covers strategies like providing

opportunities for the transition, the formation of structure functions, providing examples to learn the concepts, ensuring practices for achieving excellence, ensuring tasks related to the support and assessment of readiness for the next stage of learning. These tasks range from those that are independently run by peers (low intensity), only teacher-led (high intensity), or by highlighting the broad steps, long-term objectives (low intensity) to stress small passages, short-term goals (high intensity). In essence, this is a multi-methodical and multi-level approach, which is a combination of strategies associated with various learning models such as direct instruction, cognitive behavioural, or constructivist.

This concept of continuous learning strategies has some similarities with the American version of "continuum of this instruction" (Mercer et al., 1996). This is a kind of individual continuum of the presence of other assistants who may be teachers or other staff, including peers. In this constellation, individual students and other staff entering the learning process have some function of managing the learning processes and the employees. However, this can be understood only as a theoretical basis for various positions in the continuum associated with different learning theories (behavioural, constructivist and individual constructivism). Therefore, flexibility in the teaching approach is extremely important, and not belonging to any particular theoretical model.

It is therefore important that we acknowledge the continuum of teaching approaches. It is therefore necessary to reject teaching as a dichotomy among groups of general education and special schools, and accept the continuously varying concept of inclusive teaching practices. This also includes the incompatible concept of specialised education – special pedagogic.

The key question is whether inclusive teaching needs special pedagogy. If we understand inclusive education in the universal inclusive sense, then the answer is no, because every separational or distinctive treatment threatens the overall good, even if it is for a variety of curricular objectives, different teaching strategies and identifying individuals with a disorder. If, however, our approach is partially integrative (assuming a special school for some), then yes, because inclusive pedagogy needs specialized teaching⁵ for certain persons identified as functioning unusually and atypically, who are referred to as persons with a disability / invalidity and it is necessary to take account of their needs (Norwich, 2013). In the case of that inclusive pedagogy we may need some kind of specialization, but this does not mean that a separate special teacher is necessary for students in common schools; specialized teaching should therefore be implemented by general teachers themselves. Maybe special teachers or teaching assistants will help a general teacher. For some cases it will be necessary to take some pupils from common classroom and place them in separate classes or groups (also because of individual

Specialized (inclusive) teaching is teaching of different strategies, methods and customized content in a well arranged inclusive environment. Special teaching typically refers to a separate group of students with specific needs (Author's remark).

learning assistance); but in this case teachers should also conduct lessons with flexible teaching strategies, because of the different students in the classroom.

The Slovenian school, whose basis is an inclusive paradigm, therefore requires "inclusive" general teachers for persons with special needs in "normal" schools, who will master flexible teaching strategies and will be able to identify the specific needs of individual students, not just those that the system officially defines as having "special needs", but all others, including talented ones. Then we will not need to deal with the question of whether students with special needs inhibit other students from gaining knowledge. This does not mean that we have solved the problem of the relevant qualifying teachers for inclusive teaching in Slovenia with three programs of the Master program of inclusive education. It is important to consider what we have done with most of the current teaching staff who face the diversity of students every day and are in trouble because we have not provided them with adequate training for different school diversity. The same holds true for all future teachers who will become teachers in such inclusive schools while educational programs in faculties remained the same. Part of the solution is learning and physical assistance, which is even enacted in law and available for pupils with special needs. But let us be fair: if additional and specific knowledge is needed for teaching the blind in special classes in special schools, are not the same knowledge and skills required in common general classes where you have in the same room one student with blindness, two with emotional disorders, and one with Asperger's syndrome? Likewise, it is not a solution to employ four special pedagogues beside the regular teacher. Instead, we might hire one inclusive teacher to replace those four...

Even if the education policy consistently follows the positions of counsellors in Slovenian primary, secondary and special schools, who in our analysis proved that we still need a type of special schools for students with mental disabilities, it does not mean that teachers in general schools will not be faced with the challenge of teaching exactly such students. Namely, following the parents' freedom of choice and because we comply with the Convention of children's rights in what is best for the child, it may happen that such students will find themselves in ordinary classrooms, and teachers will be faced with new challenges or possibly distress.

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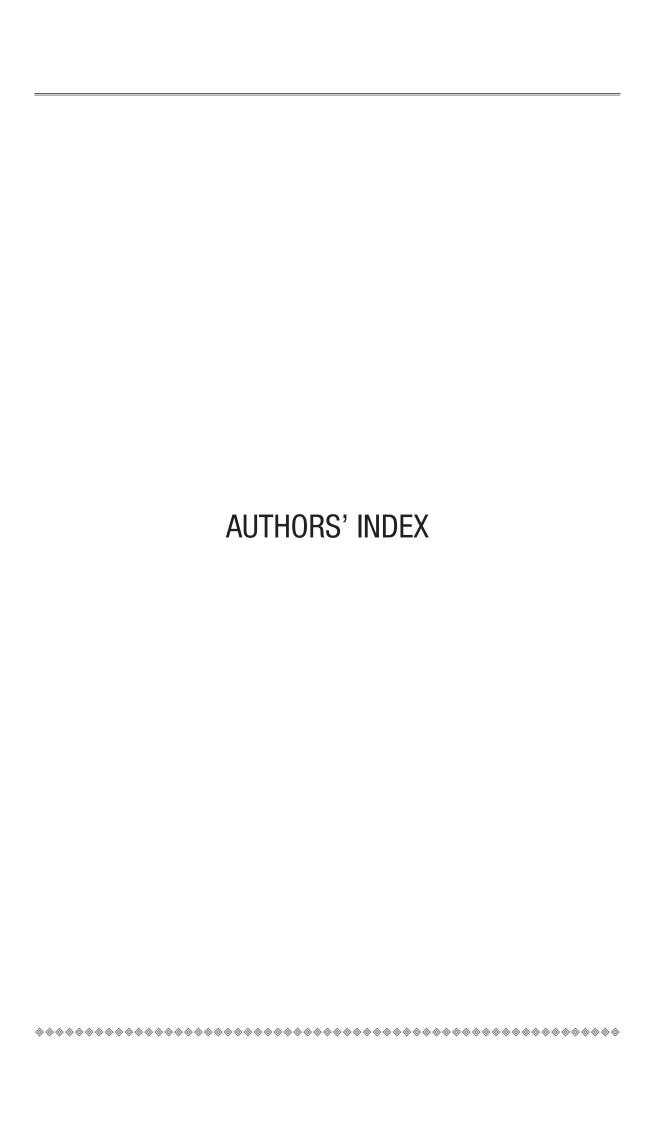
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Α

Abdelbasit, A. 119
Abu-Rayya, H. M. 137, 149
Achenbach, T. M. 137
Adeniyi, S. O. 56
Agran, M. 50, 59
Ahmed, E. 159, 169
Ainscow, M. 20, 21, 25, 77, 86, 104
Algahazo, E. M. 50, 59
Alper, S. 50, 59
Ang, R. P. 196
Arsenović-Pavlović, M. 16
Astor, A. R. 159
Avramidis, E. 22, 49, 50, 55, 56, 57, 58, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85
Avtqis, T. A. 155.

В

Bandini, T. 153 Banjac, S. 100 Baráth, T. 78 Baričić, T. 133 Bartholini, I. 157, 159, 161, 162 Bartolome, L. I. 23 Batini, F. 156 Baucal, A. 22, 23, 100, 108, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 129, 132 Baucal, I. 16, 17 Bauman, Z. 154, 168 Bayliss, P. 49 Beck, U. 154, 168 Begen, F. M. 109 Benbenishty, R. 159 Bender, W. N. 79, 83 Benner, S.M. 114 Bennett, J. 119, 124 Bešić, M. 175 Bhatnagar, N. 55 Billinglsey, B. 204 Biro, M. 124 Bodroža, B. 196, 197, 198, 203 Bones, R. 50, 57 Booth, T. 185, 193 Borić, S. 54 Bossaert, G. 105

Bourdieu, P. 107, 109, 113
Bourdon, K. H. 139
Braithwaite V. 159
Braunholtz, T. 106
Brophy, J.E. 155, 157
Broughan, Ch. 113
Brown, J. S. 22
Brown, S. D. 196
Brownell, M. T. 79, 83, 84, 85
Bruinsma, M. 195, 202
Bunch, G. 49, 54
Burden, R. 49
Burnett, A. 119
Buzzi, C. 153, 154

C, Č

Calabrò, A.R. 153 Cameron, D. L. 50 Campbell, J. 57 Carney, A.G. 159 Cavalli, A. 153, 154, 156 Chambers, D. 57, 58 Chong, W. H. 196 Civita, A. 161, 162 Coakley, J. 105 Cook, B. G. 77, 78, 79, 80 Crighton, J. 123, 124 Crockett, J. B. 20 Cuskelly, M. 57 Cabarkapa, M. 196 Čagran, B. 79, 81, 83, 84, 85 Čekić-Marković, J. 16 Cotar Konrad, S. 79, 83, 84, 85

D

D'Ambrosio, M. 156
Dadds, M. R. 141
De Giacomo, A. 139
De Heus, P. 195
De Lillo, A. 153, 154
De Sanctis, O. 156
Diekstra, R. F. 195
Djerić, I. 91
Djević, R. 16, 49, 50, 54, 56, 98
Dogliani, P. 153
Donnelly, P. 105

Drljić, K. 80 Glazzard, J. 49 Dror. 0.80 Goffman, E. 155, 160, 161, 169 Due, P. 78, 120, 122, 159 Golubović, Š. 187, 188 Duguid, P. 22 Goodman, A. 147 Goodman, R. 137, 138, 139, 141 Dyson, A. 63, 75 Džinović, V. 91 Gordon-Burns, D. 32 Govoni, R. S. 119 E Griffin, C. C. 203 Grim, J.C. 114 Elkins, J. 24 Grubačić, J. 196 Emam, M. M. 79, 80, 83, 84, 85 Guskey, T. R. 91 Emery, D. W. 196 Gutvain, N. 82, 93 Engstrom, C. 109 Guy, W. 119 Ernst, C. 80 Eškirović, B. 184, 189 Н Espelage, D.L. 153 Habermas, J. 154, 168 F Hammond, L. 56 Hanak, N. 185 Farkas, L. 126 Harel, Y. 153, 159 Fisher, S. 155 Hargeaves, A. 91 Florian, L. 58 Harvey, H. 154 Fokolade, O. A. 56 Hawes, D. J. 141 Forbes, F. 77 Hawkins, K. 113 Forlin, C. 22, 56, 57, 58, 80 Heath, A.F. 155 Fornella, Z. 159 Heung, V. 50 Fraser, J. B. 21 Hill, H. 91 Friedman, E. 16 Hmelak, M. 79 Fullan, M. 91, 177 Hodge, S. 114 Furlonger, B. 56 Holborn, M. 103 Hossain, S. 137 G Hrnjica, S. 22, 50, 56 Gaad, E. 50, 56, 58 Huan, V. S. 196 Gajić, 0. 103, 108, 112 Hunt, L. 113 Gale, T. 114 Hussein, S. A. 137 Galland, O. 153, 154 Gallino, L. 154 Gašić-Pavišić, S. 22, 93 Inglehart, R. 153 Gasperoni, G. 154, 155 Issawi, R. 50 Gatti, U. 153 Ivić, I. 39 Giannakopoulos, G. 141, 146 Giannetti, E. 162 J Giddens, A. 154, 168 Gidley, J.M. 105 Jablan, B. 185 Gilmore, L. 57 Jansen, E. 195, 202 Giroux, H.A. 154 Jeremić, J. 16 Glaubman, R. 50 Jimerson, S.R. 159

Jokić, T. 15 Joksimović A. 51, 52 Jovanović, 0. 16, 17, 50, 54, 56 Jovanović, V. 16, 17, 108, 109

K

Kalyva, E. 50 Karsten, F. 63 Katsiyannis, A. 196 Kermauner, A. 73 Kieling, C. 137 Kilgore, K. L. 203 Kim, J. R. 79 Kiswarday, V. 80 Klaić, B. 103 Klasen, H. 138 Knežević, A. 121, 122 Kolić, M. 16, 54 Korać, I. 89, 90, 91, 95, 97 Korthagen, F. A. 78 Koskelainen, M. 138, 141, 145, 146 Kostović, S. 16 Koutrouba, K. 57 Kovač-Cerović, T. 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 35, 39 Kowalski, R.M. 157 Kowar, G. 123, 124 Krnjaja, Ž. 36, 37, 44, 91, 99 Krolick, B. 188 Kukanja Gabrijelčič, M. 79, 83, 84, 85 Kumar, C. P. 146

L

Lambe, J. 50, 57 Lash, S. 154 Laufer, A. 159 Leatherman, J. M. 79 Leccardi, C. 153 Lee, Y. 80 Lent, R. W. 195, 196 Lepičnik Vodopivec, J. 79 Lesar, I. 67 Levkov, Lj. 16 Lewis, A. 73

Leyser, Y. 56

Lalić-Vučetić, N. 93

Liebich, A. 119 Lifshitz, H. 50 Limber, S.P. 157 Loeb, R. C. 203 Loreman, T. 24, 56 Loureiro, S. R. 146 Lungulov, B. 112

Lyotard, J. 154, 169 M MacFarlane, K. 79, 80, 83, 84, 85 Macura-Milovanović, S. 16, 178 Main, S. 56 Maksimović, J. 187, 188 Malinen, 0. 50, 79, 80, 83 Marinšek, M. 79 Marković, V. 16, 188, 190, 191, 192 Marushiakova, E. 119 Marušić, M. 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 202, Marzocchi, G. M. 145, 146 McLeskey, J. 77 McVilly, K. 57 Melucci, A. 154 Menesini, E. 161, 162, 164 Mercer, C. D. 74 Merrell, K. W. 159 Meseldžija, B. 16 Meyer, A. 18, 157 Milin, V. 91 Mirković Radoš, K. 186 Mišković, M. 107, 108, 113 Mohamed, A. H. 79, 80, 83, 84, 85 Moll, L. 108 Montgomery, C. 195 Moran, A. 78 Morse, J. I. 184 Morvant, M. 203 Moss, P. 43 Movkebaieva, Z. 79

Mullis, I. V. S. 22

Murphy, D. M. 22, 57

Muzammil, K 137

Muris, P. 139

Rix, J. 65 Ν Romi, S. 56 Niemeyer, J. A. 79 Rothenberger, A. 137 Norwich, B. 50, 55, 57, 63, 64, 66, 73, 74 Rupp, A. A. 195 Ruspini, E. 153 0 Rutar, S. 79, 82 Obel, C. 145 Rutter, M. 157 Odom, S. L. 82, 85 S Olweus, D. 156, 157 Opara, B. 63, 78 Saur, A. M. 146 Ortuño-Sierra, J. 145, 146 Savolainen, H. 50 Oswald, M. 57 Sayed, Y. 65 Schmidt, M. 79, 81, 83, 84, 85 P Scott, S. 138 Pajares, F. M. 79, 83, 84, 85 Seenivasan, P. 146 Parmenter, T. R. 57 Ševkušić, S. 91 Passeron, J. C. 109 Sharma, U. 22, 50, 56, 58, 79 Pastor, P. N. 146 Shaukat S. 56 Pavlović-Babić, D. 17 Singal, N. 106 Pavlović, J. 23, 36, 37, 44, 91, 97, 99 Slee, R. 65, 178 Peček, M. 16 Smederevac, S. 124 Pellegrini, A.D. 161 Sokal, L. 50 Pešikan, A. 39, 103 Sortheix, F. M. 202 Petrović, D. 16, 93 Soudien, C. 65 Pogorevc Merčnik, J. 82 Sretenov, D. 50, 52, 56 Polat, F. 106 Stančić, M. 93, 186 Popović, D. 137, 186 Stančić, V. 93, 186 Porter, J. 56 Stanisavljević-Petrović, Z. 93 Priebe, G. 139 Stanković, D. 22, 91 Stefanović, S. 16 0 Steliou, M. 57 Štemberger, T. 79, 82 Queck C. L. 196 Stempien, L. R. 203 R Stojanovic, J. 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 129, 132 Radovanović, S. 121, 122 Stoll, L. 99 Radulović, L. 89, 91, 92, 95 Stone, L. L. 138 Rajović, V. 16, 17, 50, 54, 56, 89, 92, 95 Subban, P. 22 Rancer, A.S. 155 Šućur, Z. 103 Ravens-Sieberer, U. 146 Suzić, N. 50 Reddy, B. K. 137 Svedin, G. C. 139 Reichl, C. 195 Swart, E. 57 Reškovac, T. 175 Swearer, S.M. 153, 159 Ricci, A. 159

Rieser, R. 110

Т

Taylor, R.L. 80 Thabet, A. A. 137 Theoharis, G. 20 Thijs, A. 21 Tinto, V. 109 Tovilović, S. 124 Tsakiris, V. 50 Turner-Cobb, J. M. 109

U

Unianu, E. M. 80, 81

V

Valeo, A. 49
Vamvakari, M. 57
Van Petegem, K. 21
Van Reusen, A. K. 22
Van Roy, B. 146, 147
Van Widenfelt, B. M. 141, 145, 146
Vandenberg, B. 196
Vučinić, V. 184, 189
Vujačić, M. 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 91, 97
Vujičić, L. 79
Vukajlović, B. 56
Vuković, D. 104
Vuković, O. 104

W

Walberg, J. H. 21
Wallace, M.
Wang. Q. 196
Watkins, A. 78, 79, 81, 83, 85
Watt, H. M. G. 195, 202
Wehmeyer, M.
Weisel, A. 80
Wentzel, K.R. 155, 157
White, J. 78, 122, 123, 124
Winter, E. C. 79, 179
Woerner, W. 137, 138, 139
Woodcock, S. 49, 56
Woodhead, M. 33, 36, 37, 43
Wubbels, T. 89

Υ

Yang, B. 137 Yazbeck, M. 57 Yeo, L. S. 196 Yoon, K. S. 91

Z

Zhang, D. 196 Zovko, G. 186 Žegarac 139







Milja Vujačić

Nowadays inclusive education is seen as a priority field in development of the system of education for children with disabilities. The authors use relevant research materials and apply modern methodology. Each article shows long-term research interest of its author, reflecting their scientific interests and priorities. The edited book can be recommended not only to researches and educators, but also to students, undergraduates, graduate students, who only begin their path in science and in need of expanding research horizons.

Professor Nikolay M. Borytko (from review)

This book as a whole provides information on several countries in the wider Balkan area, for which there is limited relevant information available and communicates both commonalities and diversity. The mission of inclusive education is propelled throughout the entire book and many of the challenges discussed, are of interest of wider readership. It is certainly a useful book for anyone who is interested in inclusive education.

Professor Susana Padeliadu (from review)

The chapters follow the framework of the scientific papers with clear objectives, adequately described methodology of the studies, consist of clear descriptions of results with discussion and conclusions and also include information how results may affect the practice. Reader of the book will also find the review of relevant literature in the field of inclusive education.

Professor Marija Kavkler (from review)

