

Summary

Diverse groups in education from the perspective of pedagogy and special education

The social process associated with changing the attitudes based on equality, respect and tolerance for others, which has been going on for several decades, seems to be increasingly visible in all spheres of human life. It is recognized that diverse groups in broadly understood education are becoming an everyday reality and form the basis for theoretical concepts and practical solutions of inclusive education, often referred to as education for all. On the one hand, as Peder Haug¹ points out, among others, diverse groups are easy to accept and difficult to oppose to or even criticize because their presence is strongly based on values and ideologies such as democracy and social justice. On the other hand, they still cause a great deal of controversy due to the difficulty many of us have in dealing with the otherness of the other.

In educational policy and school and extracurricular practice, the orientation towards the “interpenetration” of many different groups of subjects in one educational space is also already a fact. Also, the analysis of the issues undertaken by researchers concerning the human being (at different stages of his/her life) shows that despite different perspectives, problems, areas of his/her functioning, they most often come down to searching for theoretical and practical solutions in the scope of his/her holistic functioning in the ecosystem context. This holistic approach to a human being as well as a social group is more and more often the subject of interest of pedagogues, special educators in terms of differences and similarities, on which a common educational space can be built.

And it was seeing a shift in the perception of the group as maximally diverse with its potential in the areas of interest for educators and special educators that encouraged me to bring together in one volume different perspectives on the common and specific challenges of “isolated” groups, as well as their co-functioning in heterogeneous groups.

What unites all the texts presented in the book is the focus on man and his multidimensionality in the context of needs, abilities, limitations, age, choices, action, and creativity. Such a concentration of scientific texts is also in line with what Waldemar Furmanek² wrote about, pointing out that “slowly, however, in the opinions of researchers the view about the necessity of acknowledging the primacy

¹ P. Haug, *Understanding inclusive education: ideals and reality*, “Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research” 2016, 19 (3), p. 207. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2016.1224778>.

² W. Furmanek, *Pedagogika wobec wyzwań współczesności*, “Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska”, sectio J – Paedagogia – Psychologia 2013, vol. XXVI, 1–2, p. 12.

of a human being (homocentrism) and accepting the assumption of poly-paradigmatic character of the conducted research is surfacing [...] we are thus returning to the four questions of Immanuel Kant, who asking about a human being, poses a question: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? What is man?”

The texts presented here are an attempt to answer these questions, which are primarily directed towards education in its broadest sense. The first part of the texts concerns the theoretical contexts of determinants of education of diverse groups, starting from the determinants of educational inequality, through the production of boundary and difference in education, to cooperative teaching - learning in a diverse group. Another separate part consists of texts showing, in a way, the universality of problems of people with different developmental and educational needs in the context of selected subjects: children and youth living in rural areas, gifted students, students with autism spectrum disorders, students with communication disorders and people with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities. This section is complemented by reflections on the diversity of students' needs at school and on optimizing the learning process, as well as by an analysis of the functioning of special teams and Nieprzetarty Szlak teams (program within scouting which caters for young people with special needs).

The whole monograph ends with an essay based on many years of scientific and practical experience of a researcher in the field of pedagogy/special education concerning reflections on the values of education at an inclusive school. It is a kind of summary of very diverse texts contained in the volume because it takes up the issues of multilevel and versatility of the search for ways of self-development, control of the understanding of oneself and the world and designing the educational space for others.

The monograph presented here is meant to be an inspiration for professionals to find solutions for creating a space for the development of each person, in which a person (regardless of individual differences) will have the opportunity to build their own competencies in the area of self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation, so that they can fully fulfil themselves in life. A diverse space for diversity conceived in such a way would aim at changing attitudes towards recognizing the importance of each of us in society (in the educational process as well) and understanding the wealth of resources that would rather open than limit us.