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- 5) manager de caz pentru copilul cu handicap aflat în grija asistentului personal sau maternal sau a adultului cu handicap beneficiar de servicii sociale
- 6) psihopedagog si/sau manager de caz în cadrul Direcțiilor Generale de Asistență Socială și Protecția Drepturilor Copilului
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Masterul, prin pregătirea asigurată, își propune asigurarea egalității șanselor în domeniul educației între elevii cu handicap și cei din învățământul de masă, cunoașterea noilor strategii de predare din domeniul educației speciale incluzive și formarea unor competențe conforme standardelor calitative românești și europene, în perspectiva exercitării profesiei în condițiile competitivității, într-o societate în continuă schimbare. Acest program concretizează experiența internațională a departamentului dobândită prin proiecte de parteneriat cu universități prestigioase din Danemarca, Spania, Italia și Marea Britanie.

În concluzie, considerăm că Programului de master Psihopedagogia Școlii Incluzive asigură un standard înalt, la nivelul exigențelor academice, a modului de transmitere a celor mai noi și pertinente informații teoretice din domeniile incluse în disciplinele predate dar în același timp contribuie activ și la promovarea unui nou sistem de valori care atribuie persoanei cu handicap rolul de cetățean cu drepturi egale în societate.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION – A CONCEPT IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE

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Summary

Special education is generally considered to be special branch of education or educational research. The concept has existed for a long time in Sweden, a little more than a century and the original meaning of the concept has been to give special education as an addition or compensatory alternative to the regular

education to people who from different reasons cannot, will not or may not follow so called regular or ordinary education 100%. In this paper we will look at the development of the concept in Sweden and how it has come to relate especially to concepts like inclusion and equity (Richardsson, 1977).

The presentation will start with the new law of 1842, which gave all Swedish children formal right to basic school education. A new school form was called “Folk School”. The law intended that all children got the right to basic education up to six years of school and it built upon a considerably longer tradition of education available everywhere in Sweden, in some places as early as in the middle of the 17th century and often in home environment. The reading ability among the Swedish population was high already 200 years earlier. This is partly a result of the reformation of the Swedish church and governmental system which brought about a very strong centralization of the infra structure under the king. However, before and after this law the limitations were many. One limitation was the fact that very few persons had what we might call a formal pedagogical education, even though the state came to have the responsibility for teacher education. The first “teachers” before the law were often men who had some connection to the official community infra structure of that time. A rather common professional who acted as teacher was the person who had the responsibility to manage the bells in the church and other services supporting the local vicar, who was a very politically important person in the local communities of that time. When the school law of 1842 was passed, it meant that every community had the responsibility to organize the local school system and this meant that everywhere a school board should be organized with the vicar as the chair person. He often had the right to sign an agreement proving that a certain person had the qualifications to act as a local teacher. Early in the history of the country, persons with different disabilities were actually trained from an early age to become teachers. The municipalities also had to arrange school houses (<https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A4rskola>), 2020.

The state started to organize schools for future teachers which were called seminars and which were aiming to work with students of all ages between 7-13. Originally, mostly women became the first generation of seminar-educated teachers. However, after a generation the system became divided into two parts. One part aimed to the younger children 7-9 and the other part aimed for the higher ages 10-13. The teacher education also became divided so that the second stage became oriented towards male teachers who also gradually became more well payed (1906) and from being a general equal seminar system, the Swedish educational system became divided into a two part system which gradually also developed into a three part system with two years of education on each level. The levels were named low, middle and high stage. The seminars were regarded as a bit inferior from the other voluntary school forms and it is not until present days that teacher education has been included among academic forms of education.

One further limitation was the situation mentioned above that there existed a higher form of education which was voluntary and expensive and called the lyceum. It was entered from natural reasons by children of the economically well to do and was the only possibility to access university afterwards. A lot of the basic education before that level was still performed at home after the passing of the law and many parents who could afford it took responsibility themselves for the education of their children or enlisted private teachers.

Another limitation was the cost connected with going to school. Food, clothes, distance and maybe most important for many not so well to do farming families – a child was a work resource at home and time spent at school was an economic loss at home. This was mostly the fact for young boys who were expected to start at a very early stage to “help” at home, meaning to work as much as a child’s body could take. During the 19th and early twentieth centuries it was quite common that children were kept at home instead of being allowed to go to school for long periods. There were no strong legal tools to make children attend the school education. Only in the 20th century children took part in a majority of the school lectures. Gradually however, all basic voluntary education in Sweden became free of cost, including a daily meal.

There were no formal limitations that stopped children from attending school lectures because of disabilities. The only limitation was practical, that parents, teachers or the children themselves felt that school was “out of reach”. This meant that in the early years you could almost talk about a form of (partial) inclusion. Everybody was welcome and the main “course plan” was to show that you were able to read and write basically and to do some mathematics. The reading was often connected to religious documents, and a sort of regular examination consisted of the vicar having tests of the religious knowledge of the members of the parish. The first formal national central study plan came in 1878.

However, awareness of the special educational needs that followed for children who were born with certain disabilities, mostly physical like blindness and deafness made certain individuals with medical or pedagogical competence create special initiatives for those children. The older tradition that individuals with disabilities were trained to become teachers probably also influenced this development. The early history of what may then be called special education is full of examples of pioneers who worked out of idealism.

For groups with cognitive or mental needs another type of institution was created with a medical profile. Those individuals were considered to be more “invisible” in the public eye. We are considering large medical institutions or hospitals where treatment and care were the keywords. This means that pedagogy was more or less absent. Like in the Soviet Union, education and the view that people develop and learn without special limits was questioned from a utilitarian perspective. If you were considered to be “un-educationable” you were not killed outright like in

certain states or political systems but you were put into more or less humanitarian institutions with medically trained staff. In Sweden several large hospital-like institutions were created already in the 19th century and some of them existed as late as into the 1990's. The most well-known of them was Vipeholm where a world-famous unique study on dental hygiene and the effect of sugar was performed in the 1940's. This merits an article in its own right about the situation how people considered "worthless" from a socioeconomic point of view, were used to show that sugar in food is destructive to teeth.

A number of local, regional or national more or less private efforts with high ideologic content was initiated in the late 19th and early 20th century focusing on the more invisible groups in need. Since the original professional focus of the authors, beside the special educational, is the one of being logoped or speech pathologist, it is natural to mention Dr Alfild Tham who specialized for many years on the group of children with speech problems. She was also very active in the establishment of IQ-testing as an instrument to validate the placement of children into different school forms.

By the end of the 19th century there was a growing awareness that the folk school and the latter school forms could not manage all children. The visual and hearing problems were relatively easily considered but problems connected to the cognitive and emotional abilities of the children were more difficult to cope with. The state created central national schools for these groups as Tomtebodas special school for blind children and the Manilla for deaf. Both institutions were internship based and they specialized on communicative training and especially at Tomteboda, training in abilities in certain professions. And they were decidedly schools with the intent that pupils should be trained to adapt to society and to become socioeconomic assets. The approach was what could be called compensatory.

At the end of the 19th century the concept "Help-class" had also been created and a few classes had been started in different parts of the country to try to take care of pupils who from different reasons could not fully take part in the traditional form of education in the folk school. The intention was to give extra or alternative support as the idea developed and in 1905 the "help-class" was accepted on a national level and the creation of special teachers for those classes had started. The process of being offered or put into "help-class" went through the hands of specialists who applied test-instruments in the way that Dr Tham and her colleagues initiated earlier.

It should be added that there existed a totally different form of educational system in our country with the roots from an initiative by a Danish bishop in the early 19th century. The school-form is based on the German "Bildung-tradition" with roots from the ideas of Alexander Humboldt which in English could be called tuition even though the term is difficult to translate. A direct translation from Swedish is "Folk High School" and it is a form of school where the idea is to help

people to develop their inner and outer potentials, not so much to follow any special teaching plan with a special target or grades at the end, rather a help to find yourself. These schools still exist in Sweden and have been a great help for many individuals with different types of disabilities to develop and train their potentials. However, they do not work with children.

The arena of education was then set in the beginning of the 20th century and the main intention of the government was to bring all forms together into one system with the same possibilities for all children. It meant among many other things a high specialization of school forms and teachers in their profession. In the latter part of the 20th century the Swedish school system consisted of a mandatory nine-year system for everybody roughly between seven and 16 years of age. Within this system there existed several groups of different teachers for the different stages where every stage now consisted of three years for the pupils and demanded special courses for the teachers. With the system also existed several groups of special teachers, working with the pupils that seemed to need their services. The voluntary school forms were the lyceum and of course the university, where very little of special support existed (Egidius, 1973).

However, the structure was not totally stable and the debate regarding the rights of students with special needs was going on all the time. A majority of debaters in the middle part of the century regarded a solution that defined the special needs by specialists (often medical) and then created special and separate compensatory alternative support solutions at school for those who seemed to need something out of the ordinary. It even meant the creation of a totally new school form for students with cognitive learning problems or mental retardation, a term which today is considered as more or less obsolete (1968). The school form in Swedish was “Särskolan” which is almost impossible to translate and it was intended for students who could not follow the ordinary course plans, something which was decided through tests by experts. The courses followed central plans of their own and was closely connected to a law which came in 1967 and was called (also in Swedish) “Omsorgslagen” – the “Care Law”. It focused on the rights of the “invisible” group of persons with mental retardation and probably the most important part of the law was the part where it was decided that people with mental retardation should have education, that nobody should be excluded from education (Grünwald, 1967).

This law was considered as a major step in the field of human rights and it changed the situation for the target group dramatically, in the combination with “Särskolan”. The target group very quickly came to include children and adolescents with multiple disabilities, individuals who very easily had found themselves outside any category. And it also revitalized an old and very lively controversy regarding classification in general of individuals according to something so vague as a certain disability or a group of disabilities. A central idea was – is an individual his or her disability or should we look upon people as people with a certain need instead. And out of this

idea came gradually the still ongoing discussion around the meaning of special education and the related words integration and inclusion and also equity (Areschoug, 2000).

After almost 200 years of the history of the organized centrally state-controlled school-system of Sweden we can make a summary regarding the needs of those who did not follow the main track of education and became the clients of special education in all its forms. Let us call them people with special needs which is a term which at least in the Anglican part of the world has come into use. We can see how state and communities have tried to develop different models, from the early “help-classes” to the efforts in the wake of inclusion today. During all the efforts made, we can see that a lot of resources have always been allocated to the special solutions for people with special needs. However, not always have these resources been used in a way which follows Sweden’s high demands on democracy as a corner stone in our school system. Help classes and special teachers and segregated forms of special education put a special stamp on the pupils who receive the education and the question is if this very special “apartness” makes the receivers part of a really democratic society. Even though the resources may be abundant, the stamp of differentness will always be there. How to make pupils with special needs real and equal members of our society and most important of all, how do we understand the nature of the special needs (Stukat & Bladini, 1986).

The final question above has introduced a social aspect upon a problem which has been defined in medical, clinical and most of all individual term for generations. Can we be sure that a special need is something which solely is a part of an individual? May it also not be something which is a product of social stigmata like for instance poverty or being outcast from different reasons or simply not having had a real chance at school (Helldin, 1997)? During the last part of the 20th century, the established view of special needs as something mostly related to the individual has clashed with the newer view that people are products of societal factors, a relational perspective very much inspired by the thoughts of Lev Vygotsky. This clash has sometimes been very hard and it is too early to say that one or the other of the models of understanding has won. Probably the result is some sort of compromise (Nilholm & Björck-Åkesson, 2007). The socially oriented model has resulted in the great wave of inclusion which has been sweeping over the entire world for about three decades now. In Sweden it has resulted in a small backlash so that people working in the field of special education have started to reflect upon the need for special methods. To combine with the work for inclusion It is objectively true that a blind person may need tactile communication methods and a deaf person will need sign language and severely motor disabled persons need tools like wheel chairs, individually adapted communication boards etc. This does not diminish their ability to become included, rather the opposite. To make a simplifying but nevertheless valid

conclusion – to become fully included into society you may need something special to help you (Brodin & Lindstrand, 2004).

In special education in Sweden today we have two main categories of specialists educated at several of our universities: Special pedagogue and special teacher. Both educations are 1,5 year long and the first category of teacher is more of a consultant and expert, while the other one is a special teacher. If you want to become a special teacher you can choose to specialize on language problems, mental retardation and a few other central areas. It is like an echo from older times when there existed speech and hearing pedagogues. Apart from this, all the teachers of Sweden have to follow mandatory courses in special education so that all teachers on all levels at school have to be prepared to cope with special needs in their daily work. This is a solution typical for Sweden where there always seems to be an ambition to reach “a middle solution” (Haug, 1998).

“Särskolan” still exists and is rather popular among parents since it offers good economic resources. There also exists a few national specialist schools where students with complicated multiple disabilities in connection with mental retardation problems. One of them also has a special part working with students with special speech and language problems. There also exist a number of regional schools for students with hearing problems. The debate is going on and the dynamics are very strong in this debate so that it sometimes feels like being in the middle of a hurricane. The discussion has also included the number of new Swedes during latter years and added the question of multiculturalism to the main question of special needs (Rosenqvist, 2004). Probably this is a situation recognizable in all the other countries where inclusion is a honorary word.

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