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Educación inclusiva para personas con discapacidad intelectual: una mirada a los enfoques y desafíos actuales

Lukáš Stárek

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Institute of Education and Counselling.
Department of Pedagogy V lázních 3, 159 00 Praha 5 – Malá Chuchle, Czech Republic.
E-mail: starekl@ivp.czu.cz; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6068-215X>

Resumen. Este artículo se centra en un análisis comparativo de la educación inclusiva para personas con discapacidad intelectual en diferentes sistemas educativos. El objetivo del estudio es identificar los principales enfoques de inclusión, evaluar su eficacia y comparar los factores clave que influyen en la implementación de estrategias inclusivas. El estudio utiliza un enfoque cualitativo basado en la síntesis de fuentes expertas existentes. Se realizó un análisis de contenido comparativo de los cuatro estudios seleccionados, complementado con una búsqueda bibliográfica más amplia, lo que permitió identificar las características comunes y distintivas de los enfoques inclusivos. El análisis se basó en la codificación temática de categorías clave como marcos legislativos, estrategias pedagógicas y apoyo al alumnado con dificultades de aprendizaje. Los resultados muestran que la educación inclusiva para personas con discapacidad intelectual se ve influenciada no solo por la normativa legislativa, sino también por la disponibilidad de apoyo educativo especial, el enfoque del profesorado y el grado de cooperación entre centros educativos y familias. Los modelos eficaces de inclusión priorizan el apoyo individualizado, la formación sistemática del profesorado y la cooperación interdisciplinar. Dado el rápido desarrollo de los métodos pedagógicos y las herramientas tecnológicas, cabe suponer que la educación inclusiva seguirá cambiando y requerirá una adaptación e innovación constantes. El estudio contribuye a una comprensión más profunda de los factores que influyen en la educación inclusiva y ofrece recomendaciones para la práctica pedagógica, incluyendo la introducción de formas de apoyo más flexibles y una mejor formación docente. Los hallazgos pueden servir de base para futuras investigaciones sobre la eficacia de las estrategias inclusivas en diferentes contextos educativos.

Palabras clave: educación inclusiva, discapacidad intelectual, estrategias pedagógicas, educación especial, legislación.

Inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities: a look at current approaches and challenges

Abstract. This article focuses on a comparative analysis of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities in different educational systems. The aim of the study is to identify the main approaches to inclusion, evaluate their effectiveness and compare the key factors influencing the implementation of inclusive strategies. The study uses a qualitative approach based on the synthesis of existing expert sources. A comparative content analysis of the four selected studies was conducted, complemented by a broader literature search, which enabled the identification of common and distinct features of inclusive approaches. The analysis was conducted based on thematic coding of key categories such as legislative frameworks, pedagogical strategies and support for pupils with learning disabilities. The results show that inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities is influenced not only by legislative regulations, but also by the availability of special educational support, the approach of teachers and the degree of cooperation between schools and families. Effective models of inclusion emphasise individualised support, systematic teacher training and interdisciplinary cooperation. Given the rapid development of pedagogical methods and technological tools, it can be assumed that inclusive education will continue to change and require constant adaptation and innovation. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing inclusive education and offers recommendations for pedagogical practice, including the introduction of more flexible forms of support and improved teacher training. The findings can serve as a basis for future research on the effectiveness of inclusive strategies in different educational contexts.

Keywords: inclusive education, intellectual disability, pedagogical strategies, special education, legislation.

INTRODUCTION

The educational policy of the Czech Republic aims at the development of an educational system in which education is at the forefront of society and individuals. Education is considered to be an important value that individuals develop throughout their lives. Quality education should be accessible to everyone so as to give everyone an equal chance in life. At every level of education, it is important that students know what is expected of them and what they can expect. Education is based on the current state of human knowledge, encourages creativity and meets the needs of society. People accumulate knowledge throughout their lives. His interest in education is supported by quality teaching staff. They should be well-prepared for their profession and should be able to guide and motivate pupils to achieve the maximum in the set objectives, taking into account the social tendencies related to inclusive education.

Inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities is a key area of contemporary pedagogy that reflects broader societal changes in attitudes towards people with special educational needs. With increasing efforts to ensure equal opportunities and remove barriers, legislative frameworks, pedagogical strategies and support mechanisms are being developed in many countries

around the world to enable the effective inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities in mainstream education.

Although the concept of inclusive education is based on the idea of equality and social justice, its implementation faces a number of challenges. These include not only institutional and legislative conditions, but also the practical application of appropriate teaching methods, the role of teachers and teaching assistants, and the availability of the necessary resources and support. While in some countries there is a long tradition of inclusive education, in others this approach is still taking shape and faces significant obstacles.

The aim of this article is to identify the key factors influencing inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities through a comparative analysis of various studies. In particular, we will focus on the legislative framework, pedagogical strategies used, barriers to the implementation of inclusive policies and the impact on teaching staff. The analysis will offer a synthesis of findings from different countries and education systems in order to formulate recommendations for further developments in this field.

The following chapters will first introduce the research methodology, which describes the approach to comparative analysis of expert studies. Next, the individual aspects of inclusive education will be discussed, paying particular attention not only to the differences between the different approaches, but also to their commonalities and potential applications in practice. The final part of the paper will then summarise the main findings and offer recommendations for improving inclusive practice in the field of education for people with intellectual disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a comparative analysis of the literature on inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities. The chosen methodology is based on a synthesis and critical evaluation of relevant studies that address the legislative framework, pedagogical strategies, barriers to inclusion and possible solutions. The aim of this analysis is to identify common and divergent aspects of different approaches to inclusion in different educational contexts, with an emphasis on the effectiveness of the measures introduced and their real impact on educational practice.

Comparative analysis, also known as the comparative method, is a scientific approach based on the systematic comparison of two or more phenomena, entities or systems in order to identify their similarities and differences. This method is widely used in various scientific disciplines, including sociology, history, anthropology, economics, and education. In the context of literature work, comparative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the topics under investigation through structured comparison of different sources and perspectives. (Schweisfurth et al., 2020) Thus, the use of comparative analysis in literature work requires careful planning and clear delineation of the aspects being compared in order to achieve valid and reliable results.

Studies that met the following criteria were selected for the comparative analysis:

- Thematic relevance - the included studies deal with the issue of inclusive education of people with intellectual disabilities, focusing on legislative aspects, pedagogical strategies, barriers and challenges of inclusion or the role of teaching staff.

- Methodological credibility - studies were selected with regard to their scientific validity, i.e. whether they are published in peer-reviewed journals or are part of academic research projects.
- International perspective - taking into account studies from different education systems allows for a broader view of inclusive education and its different implementation in practice.
- Practical applicability - articles that contain empirical data, case studies or specific intervention strategies were prioritized to offer not only theoretical but also practical insights.
- The following aspects were key in the analysis:
 - Legislative framework - how countries approach inclusion in terms of legislation and what mechanisms support the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in mainstream education.
 - Applied pedagogical methods - what strategies and approaches are used in inclusive education and what is their effectiveness.
 - Challenges to inclusion - what barriers to effective inclusion and what strategies are used to overcome them.
 - Impact on teaching staff - how inclusive education affects teachers and teaching assistants, their professional competences and working conditions.
- A comparative approach was used as the main method of analysis as it allows for the identification of differences and commonalities in inclusive educational approaches across studies. The following were studied as part of the analysis:
 - Conclusions from peer-reviewed articles - their key ideas were categorized and compared.
 - Statistical data - where studies have been supplemented by quantitative research, this data has been used to support conclusions.
 - Case studies - where articles contained descriptions of specific inclusive programmes, their strengths and weaknesses were analysed.
 - Comparative tables and thematic analysis - were created to visualize the differences between the different approaches and to identify trends and patterns in inclusive education.

Although the analysis is based on a wide range of expert studies, there are limitations. One of these is the availability of primary empirical data that would allow for deeper comparisons of the effectiveness of inclusive strategies in specific school settings. Another limitation is the variability of education systems in different countries, which may affect the transferability of some conclusions. The results of this paper should therefore be seen as an indicative overview of trends and challenges in inclusive education that need to be further investigated and adapted to the specific conditions of individual education systems.

RESULTS

Legislative and institutional framework

Inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities is significantly influenced by the legislative and institutional framework that defines the rights of pupils with special educational

needs and sets out the obligations of school institutions and state institutions. This framework varies from country to country depending on the historical development of education systems, the degree of support for inclusive education and the legislative measures that determine the conditions for the integration of pupils with intellectual disabilities into mainstream education. In addition to national legislative arrangements, international agreements, conventions and guidelines that set standards for inclusive education policy at a global level play an important role.

International organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO and the European Union have long promoted inclusive education as a key principle in school policy. Among the most important documents are *the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD, 2006), which establishes the right to inclusive education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities. Article 24 of this convention obliges signatory states to ensure inclusive education systems at all levels.

Another important document is the *Salamanca Declaration* (1994), adopted at a UNESCO conference, which for the first time systematically defined the principles of inclusion and recommended that countries adapt their education systems to the needs of pupils with disabilities. The European Union also promotes inclusive education through directives and strategic documents such as the *European Disability Strategy 2021-2030*, which emphasises the need to strengthen inclusive approaches to education.

At the national level, approaches to inclusion vary depending on the legal and institutional conditions in each country. In the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland), for example, inclusive education is firmly enshrined in law and mainstream schools have an obligation to provide support for pupils with intellectual disabilities without segregating them. In contrast, in some Central European countries, including the Czech Republic, inclusion has undergone major reforms in recent years, but there is still a duality between mainstream and special schools.

The right to education is a fundamental human right. After 1990, the structure of the school system in the Czech Republic was created as part of the equalization of educational opportunities. It guarantees the right of every individual to an education according to his or her abilities and skills. These rights are also regulated in the current version of Education Act No. 82/2015 Coll. on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher vocational and other education. (amendment to Act No. 561/2004 Coll.) This Act ensures education according to the needs of each individual, equal access to education for all without discrimination, free education and the possibility of lifelong learning for individuals. At the same time, it defines and regulates the education system for pupils with special educational needs, which include pupils with mental disabilities. The aim of the legislative changes was to comprehensively change the environment for inclusive education in primary schools. The education of children, pupils and students can be carried out with the help of support measures. The law defines ... „supportive measures means necessary adjustments in education and school services appropriate to the health condition, cultural background or other living conditions of the child, pupil or student. Children, pupils and students with special educational needs have the right to the provision of support measures free of charge by the school and educational establishment.“ (§16, Act No. 82/2015 Coll.)

Pupils with special educational needs are entitled under the above-mentioned law to the provision of support measures, which consist of the provision of counselling assistance, adaptation of the organisation, aids, workplace, the use of compensatory aids, education according to an indi-

vidual plan, the use of a teaching assistant or other teaching staff, etc. The regulation of the rules for the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and the education of pupils referred to in Article 16(9) of the Education Act is dealt with in detail in Decree No. 27/2016 Coll. This Decree characterises the possibilities of support measures that lead to the correction of a pupil's learning and educational problems due to a medical condition and also deals with an individual education plan for pupils with special educational needs.

Education is also one of the basic components of an individual's integration into society. The promotion of integration and equal opportunities within education is also evident in the Czech Republic's accession to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which was done in 2009), which takes disability as a concept of interaction and seeks to combat discrimination and, conversely, to promote equal opportunities. The purpose of this treaty is to protect and ensure the recognition of human rights for people with disabilities, including people with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, by signing the Convention, the Czech Republic has committed itself to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes against people with disabilities in society. It thus guarantees, among other things, to create conditions for equal opportunities in education, the development of talents, creativity or potential and the promotion of an inclusive approach in education. It also guarantees to assist in the acquisition of practical and theoretical knowledge according to the abilities and skills of each individual and to provide an appropriate environment, form of education or access to all levels of education (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

An important standard is the National Curriculum, which presents framework curricula that set the direction and content of teaching for different types of educational institutions and for different levels of education. The Framework Curricula are regulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. The Framework Curriculum is, among other things, set out for pre-school education and regulates the curriculum and content of teaching in kindergartens or special schools. There is also a framework curriculum for primary education regulating the education of pupils with mild mental disabilities, under which the educational process is adapted according to the physical and psychological capabilities of the pupils. There is also a framework curriculum for special primary schools and a framework curriculum for vocational education. These programmes provide the basic curricula on which individual schools subsequently base the preparation and implementation of teaching, including schools for pupils with intellectual disabilities (Team of authors, Framework curriculum for primary education, 2017).

The framework curricula are followed by school curricula, which are developed by each school itself, based on the framework curriculum designed for the type of education in that type of establishment. If necessary, an individual education plan is then developed for pupils, which is particularly suitable for individually integrated pupils, pupils with intellectual disabilities, but also for group-integrated pupils or pupils in special school settings. It is based on the school curriculum and is drawn up according to the information from the results of psychological and special education examinations. The plan outlines the content and timing of the lessons to match the pupils' abilities and skills. It also lists all the support measures to be used in the pupil's learning. This plan is usually drawn up before the pupil starts school, but it may change as necessary during the school year.

Support measures are enshrined in Czech legislation, namely Act No.82/2015 Coll., which amends Act No.561/2004 Coll., on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher vocational and other education, and Decree No.27/2016 Coll., on the education of pupils with special educational

needs and gifted pupils. Support measures consist of counselling assistance from the school and the school counselling centre. On the basis of their recommendations, adjustments are made to the organisation of the content, assessment, forms and methods of education and school services, including the provision of teaching of special education subjects and including the extension of the length of secondary or higher vocational education by up to two years. Furthermore, the conditions for admission to and completion of education shall be amended. The use of compensatory aids, special textbooks and special teaching aids, the use of communication systems for deaf and deaf-blind persons, and the expected learning outcomes within the limits set by the framework education programmes and accredited education programmes will be defined. They also provide for the possibility of education in accordance with the IVP or the use of an assistant or other pedagogical worker (interpreter, transcriber, etc.). (Act No. 82/2015 Coll.).

The severity of individual disabilities requires varying degrees of support to ensure that the resulting effect is as acceptable to the pupil as possible, while achieving the best possible results within the limits of what is possible. Support measures are divided into five levels according to organisational, pedagogical and financial requirements. Support measures can be combined. Support measures of the higher levels are used only in cases where the support measures of the lower levels are insufficient to meet the pupil's learning potential. Inclusion in support measures shall be determined by the implementing regulation. Support measures of the first level are applied by the school without a recommendation from the counselling centre; support measures of the second to fifth level can only be applied with a recommendation from the counselling centre. The prior written informed consent of the adult pupil or legal guardian is always a condition for the provision of second to fifth level support measures. If, on the basis of the recommendation of the counselling centre, it is no longer necessary to provide a second to fifth level support measure, the school shall cease to provide it after consultation with the pupil or legal representative.

In the United States, inclusive education is regulated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990), which ensures the right to a free and accessible education for all children with disabilities. This law requires schools to provide what are called Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which set out specific supports for each student with special needs.

A comparison of international and national approaches shows that while some countries have a long tradition of inclusive education and legislation is comprehensively developed, in other countries there are still institutional barriers that prevent the full implementation of inclusion.

In the process of implementing inclusive education, both government institutions, which are responsible for the development and implementation of education policy, and NGOs, which provide support to schools, teachers and families of children with intellectual disabilities, play a key role.

Government organisations, such as ministries of education, inspection bodies or research institutes, are tasked with creating the legislative framework and ensuring compliance. Many countries have special agencies for inclusive education that coordinate the implementation of inclusive measures in school practice. In the Czech Republic, for example, this role is partly fulfilled by the *National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic*, which is involved in training teachers and providing methodological support.

NGOs play an important role in advocacy, family support and the provision of specialist services. Many organisations focus on raising awareness of inclusive education and supporting schools in implementing inclusive methods. Some of the most prominent organisations working in this area include:

- *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education*, which coordinates research and methodological support in the field of inclusive education in Europe.
- *Inclusion International*, a global network of organisations promoting the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.
- *Czech Professional Society for Inclusive Education (ČOSIV)*, which focuses on improving the conditions for inclusion in Czech schools.

These organisations not only provide methodological materials and expert advice, but also often play a key role in monitoring compliance with inclusive policies and promoting changes in legislation.

In some countries, particularly in Scandinavia and Western Europe, there is close cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations, which enables more effective implementation of inclusive measures. In Sweden, for example, NGOs are involved in the development of education policies and help schools to apply inclusive methods.

In contrast, in countries with less developed inclusive policies, NGOs face many obstacles, including lack of financial support and limited opportunities to influence public education policy. In these cases, inclusion is often implemented as an isolated initiative of individual schools rather than as a systematic part of the national education system.

The legislative and institutional framework plays a crucial role in the process of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities. A comparison of different approaches shows that successful implementation of inclusion depends not only on the existence of appropriate legislation, but also on good institutional support and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors. International experience suggests that the most effective inclusive education occurs where legislation is underpinned by concrete support mechanisms and where there is coordinated cooperation between the state, schools and civil society.

Pedagogical strategies

Inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities emphasizes the use of innovative pedagogical strategies that support the effective participation of students in the educational process. Key strategies include differentiated instruction and individual education plans, which allow content, methods and assessment to be adapted to the abilities and needs of individual pupils. Another important area is the application of assistive technologies to facilitate communication, cognitive development and independence of pupils with intellectual disabilities. These strategies are based on modern approaches to inclusive pedagogy and reflect the legislative and institutional framework of inclusion.

Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical strategy that respects individual differences among students and adapts the content, learning process and assessment outcomes to them. In the education of pupils with intellectual disabilities, it is essential to ensure that teaching methods are varied to match their cognitive abilities, learning pace and preferred learning styles. As stated by Inclusion

authors, differentiated instruction allows for an individualized approach, which leads to higher educational effectiveness and also promotes active participation of students in learning. (Adamus, 2019; Bazalová, 2023; Hájková & Strnadová, 2010; Pivarč, 2017; Slowík, 2022)

The access to education is basic human right and it cannot be taken from anyone nor the pupils with any disabilities. It is important to acknowledge the accessibility and inclusivity, differentiation, and individualization of education. Plus, the activation of pupils is crucial throughout educational process. Although, we can support Daňek and Klugerová (2023) thought who recognise inclusive education as tool of social exclusion.

A key tool in differentiated instruction is the individual education plan, which is the basic document that sets out the specific educational goals, methods and strategies for a particular student. The Individual Education Plan is developed in collaboration between teachers, special educators, psychologists and the pupil's family, reflecting the pupil's current needs and capabilities. In the Czech education system, the individual education plan is a key element of inclusive practice, which enables the content of teaching, support and assessment to be tailored to the pupil's individual capabilities. (Bendová & Zíkl, 2012; Goupil et al., 2022; Kaleja et al., 2014; Valenta & Müller, 2021) Cooperative learning, which replaces traditional competitiveness, plays a crucial role in strengthening social bonds among students and developing their collaborative skills. (Bačová, 2024)

Various pedagogical methods are used in the development of the individual education plan, including:

- Structured learning that helps students with intellectual disabilities better navigate the learning process through visual diagrams and clearly defined steps.
- Multisensory learning that engages the different senses and promotes more effective memorization and understanding of the material.
- Cooperative learning that promotes social interaction among students and the development of their communication skills.

The effectiveness of the Individual Education Plan depends on regular assessment and adjustment of targets in line with the pupil's progress. As authors (Snider et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2018; Valenta et al., 2015) point out, the flexibility of the Individual Education Plan is essential for successful inclusion and supporting the individual needs of pupils with learning disabilities.

Technological advances have brought a wide range of assistive technologies that allow for more effective inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in the educational process. According to the authors (Cvetković, 2021; Gajzlerová, 2015; Kopecký, 2021; Mølster & Nes, 2018; Němejc et al., 2019; Ramos & Andrade, 2014; Stárek & Klugerová, 2025), modern technologies can significantly contribute to inclusive education by compensating for some of the cognitive and communication barriers faced by pupils with intellectual disabilities.

Assistive technologies can be divided into several key categories:

- Communication Technology - Alternative and Augmentative Communication helps students with communication disabilities express their needs and engage in learning. Examples include special communication applications such as Proloquo2Go or the use of picture exchange symbols (PECS). (Maier & Klugerová, 2024).

- Visual support and structured learning - The use of visual aids such as pictograms, diagrams or interactive whiteboards facilitates orientation in the learning process and promotes cognitive understanding. Terfloth and Bauersfeld (2019), as well as Zounek et al. (2021), state that visual supports are a key element in teaching students with intellectual disabilities, as they simplify complex concepts and contribute to improved student independence.
- Digital learning apps - Personalised apps and online platforms allow learners to learn at their own pace and tailor learning content to their abilities. For example, the ABC Maestro app helps children with intellectual disabilities develop reading and writing skills through interactive tasks. (Ramos & Andrade, 2014; Terfloth Cesak, 2016; Zounek et al., 2021).
- Virtual and Augmented Reality - Modern inclusive pedagogy is beginning to use elements of virtual reality and augmented reality to simulate real-life situations and promote learning through experiential pedagogy. The European Commission (Montoya-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Nabors et al., 2020) highlight the growing importance of these technologies in the education of pupils with special educational needs, as they help with the practice of normal daily activities and enhance the cognitive functions of pupils.

Assistive technologies have the potential to overcome some of the barriers to inclusive education, but their successful implementation depends on sufficient training of teachers and the availability of the necessary technical and financial resources. According to Act No. 561/2004 Coll., the Czech education system is obliged to provide support to pupils with special educational needs, which includes access to modern technologies (Kopecký, 2021; Mølster & Nes, 2018; Nabors et al., 2020).

The use of pedagogical strategies such as differentiated instruction, individual education plans and assistive technology contribute significantly to the effective inclusion of pupils with intellectual disabilities into the mainstream education system. Although these strategies represent significant progress in inclusive education, there are still challenges associated with their implementation.

Challenges of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities

Inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities is a complex process that places high demands not only on the school system, but also on teachers, students and their families. Despite the positive trends in inclusive education, there are a number of challenges that may threaten its effective implementation. The main obstacles include barriers to inclusion and problems with funding and support for educators. (Adamus, 2019; Bazalova, 2023; Slowík, 2022; Stárek, 2022)

One of the key challenges in the field of inclusive education is the persistence of barriers, which can be structural, institutional and individual.

Negative attitudes of society and educators - prejudices and stereotypes against persons with mental disabilities persist not only in society, but also among educators and parents of classmates. There is often a belief that pupils with intellectual disabilities slow down learning or require a disproportionate amount of time and resources. These attitudes can lead to passive or active resistance to inclusion (Goupil et al., 2022; Kopecký et al., 2021).

Insufficient teacher training - although faculties of education try to prepare future teachers to work with heterogeneous classrooms, in practice there is often a lack of sufficient training for working with pupils with intellectual disabilities. Many teachers do not have sufficient knowledge

of special education methods or the skills needed for individualised teaching (Bendová & Zíkl, 2012; Tláskalová, 2021).

Inadequate environment and material barriers - the physical environment of schools is not always adapted to the needs of pupils with intellectual disabilities. The lack of adapted teaching aids, special aids and technological tools further complicates effective education. In addition, many schools are not equipped with adequate facilities for individual or group work with special educators (Valenta & Müller, 2021).

Unclear legislative support - although inclusive education is enshrined in the legislative frameworks of many countries, the implementation of legal provisions is confronted with ambiguities and different interpretations. The rules for funding, the conditions for granting support measures or the role of teaching assistants are not always uniform (Kaleja et al., 2014).

Inclusive education requires adequate funding and staffing, which is another significant challenge. Insufficient funding has a negative impact in several areas:

- Lack of funding for schools - many schools are struggling with limited budgets that are insufficient to meet the needs of inclusive education. The cost of special aids, compensatory aids, teaching assistants or other professionals (special educators, psychologists, speech therapists) is often underfunded.
- Low attractiveness of the teaching profession - the work of teachers in inclusive education is demanding and requires a high level of expertise, but the remuneration of teachers and other support staff does not reflect their demanding work. As a result, many teachers avoid working in inclusive classrooms, leading to overload and burnout for those who choose to remain in the system.
- Insufficient funding for teaching assistants - teaching assistants play a key role in inclusive education, but their working conditions are not always optimal. Low salaries, limited working hours and uncertainty about the long-term funding of the position lead to high assistant turnover and difficulties in ensuring continuity of support for pupils with intellectual disabilities.
- Limited opportunities for further training of teachers - quality inclusion requires that teachers have access to further training in special education, inclusive methods and working with pupils with different specific needs. Unfortunately, the offer of these courses is often limited, costly or time prohibitive for mainstream educators (Cvetković, 2021; Gajzler, 2015; Mølster & Nes, 2018; Nabors et al., 2020; Terfloth & Bauersfeld, 2019).

Inclusive education has a significant impact on the working conditions of teachers and teaching assistants. Although inclusion brings professional enrichment and new pedagogical challenges, it is also associated with increased stress and the need for continuous learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants working in inclusive education face a high psychological burden. Teaching heterogeneous classes requires constant attention, flexibility and the ability to respond to the individual needs of pupils. Lack of support, high administrative burdens and unclear methodological guidance can lead to frustration, fatigue and, in extreme cases, burnout. Ever-changing approaches to inclusive education require educators to regularly expand their knowledge and skills. Quality inclusive education cannot do without specialised courses on working with pupils with learning disabilities, the use of assistive technology or effective inclusive teaching strat-

egies. Ensuring the availability of these training programs is crucial to the sustainability of an inclusive education model. (Arias et al., 2019; Jovanović et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2019; Stárek & Klugerová, 2024)

Successful implementation of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities faces many barriers and challenges that need to be systematically addressed. Changing attitudes, strengthening teacher training, removing institutional and material barriers and ensuring adequate funding are key steps for effective inclusion. Only a comprehensive approach can lead to an education system that is truly inclusive and accessible to all pupils, regardless of their individual needs.

DISCUSSION

Due to the fact that individuals with intellectual disabilities are now required to attend compulsory school and have the opportunity to be educated, they are making significant progress in their mental and physical development. Depending on the mental level they reach, they are able to learn the trivium, developing their abilities and skills, thus promoting independent functioning and self-sufficiency. They also become better oriented in society. Some of them subsequently join the workforce and are part of the labour system in the Czech Republic. Education of people with intellectual disabilities leads to their personal development, self-sufficiency, independence in decision-making, and development of communication skills.

Currently, there are several ways in which people with intellectual disabilities can be educated in the Czech Republic. The advantage of individual integration into mainstream schools is the direct entry of the individual with a learning disability into the community of his or her peers. At the same time, pupils without disabilities who have a pupil with a learning disability in their group get used to the differences between them as normal, so an inclusive approach is seen.

Currently, the Czech education system is trying to integrate pupils with disabilities into mainstream schools. However, successful integration requires preparation of all participants. However, not everyone is enthusiastic about inclusive education. There are parents who prefer to educate their child with a disability in a particular primary school. They believe that their child receives all possible support and development of all personality components there. Therefore, they do not follow the inclusive trend in primary schools. Inclusive education is stated in the law to ensure that all children with disabilities have the best possible opportunity for education and a successful life in society. By respecting all the differences of all students, inclusive education can be considered as a type of successful education that eliminates discrimination and enriches the quality of life of all participants.

An analysis of expert sources on inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities reveals a wide range of approaches whose effectiveness depends on the context of their application. A common feature of all the studies analysed is the consensus that inclusive education benefits not only pupils with intellectual disabilities but also their able-bodied classmates and teachers. (Nabors et al., 2020; Slowík, 2022; Terfloth & Bauersfeld, 2019) However, the studies also point to persistent challenges and varying success rates in implementing different strategies (Adamus, 2019; Pivarč, 2017; Stárek 2022).

One of the key factors influencing the effectiveness of inclusion is teacher preparedness. As studies show, teachers often struggle with inadequate training and support, which can lead to negative attitudes towards inclusion. (Cvetković, 2021; Snider et al., 2020; Stárek & Klugerová,

2025) In contrast, studies that have examined effective school systems emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for teachers and the availability of support services. (Mølster & Nes, 2018; Němejč et al, 2019; Ramos & Andrade, 2014) Schools that have multidisciplinary collaboration between teachers, teaching assistants and special educators have been shown to have better inclusion outcomes (Kaleja et al., 2014; Terfloth & Cesak, 2016; Zounek et al., 2021).

Another topic discussed is the role of an individualised approach. Sources agree that successful inclusion depends on curriculum flexibility, differentiation of instruction, and the use of assistive technology. (Bazalova, 2023; Snider et al, 2020) However, there are differences in the degree of adaptation, with some studies emphasizing maximum inclusion of students in mainstream instruction with support, while others recommend maintaining partially segregated programs to ensure optimal learning conditions (Hájková & Strnadová, 2010; Terfloth & Bauersfeld, 2019).

Another important area of discussion is the social aspect of inclusion. Although most studies confirm the positive impact of inclusion on social interactions (Snider et al., 2020; Zounek et al., 2021), some research suggests that without targeted intervention, students with intellectual disabilities may experience social isolation. (Bendová & Zíkl, 2012; Goupil et al, 2022; Valenta & Müller, 2021) Effective strategies include peer collaboration, mentoring programs, and teacher support in building an inclusive classroom climate (Mølster & Nes, 2018; Terfloth & Bauersfeld, 2019).

In terms of the future development of inclusive education, it can be expected that emphasis will be placed on the wider implementation of digital technologies, the development of methods supporting differentiation of teaching and deeper cooperation between schools and families. However, the challenge remains to fund these measures and to ensure sufficient professional support for all stakeholders. (Bendová & Zíkl, 2012; Kaleja et al., 2014; Snider et al., 2020; Stárek, 2022)

Overall, inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities is a complex area in which pedagogical, social and organisational factors are mixed. Although there are some differences in approach and emphasis on specific strategies among expert sources, there is a general consensus that inclusion brings a range of benefits, but its effectiveness is contingent on good teacher preparation, sufficient support and the targeted development of an inclusive culture in the school environment (Bazalova, 2023; Mølster & Nes, 2018; Nabors et al., 2020; Montoya-Rodríguez et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This article has provided a detailed overview of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities, focusing on the key challenges, benefits and strategies for its effective implementation. An analysis of expert sources revealed that inclusive education is a complex process requiring the coordinated efforts of educators, assistants, parents and the wider community.

In line with the formulated aim of the thesis, several key aspects influencing the success of inclusion were identified. First of all, teacher preparedness has been shown to play a crucial role in the effectiveness of an inclusive approach, with not only professional training but also continuous professional development and access to support mechanisms being key factors. It has also been confirmed that an individualised approach to the education of pupils with intellectual disabilities is essential for their optimal development and integration into the school environment. The social aspects of inclusion were identified as another key area, highlighting that targeted support for interactions between pupils and the building of an inclusive climate is necessary to achieve positive effects.

The paper also highlighted some of the persistent problems and challenges associated with inclusive education. The main barriers include insufficient funding, lack of sufficient numbers of trained teachers and support for teaching assistants. Teacher stress and professional burnout were identified as important factors affecting the success of the inclusive approach, confirming the need to implement measures aimed at preventing them.

In terms of the future development of inclusive education, several areas appear to be key. The first is the systematic improvement of training programmes for teachers and the strengthening of their digital competences, which can facilitate the implementation of inclusive methods. It is also necessary to develop cooperation between educational institutions, special educators and families in order to better respond to the individual needs of pupils. At the same time, it appears that a greater emphasis on research into the effectiveness of different inclusive strategies can help to optimise and adapt them to the specific conditions of individual education systems.

This article has thus provided a comprehensive view of inclusive education for people with intellectual disabilities and at the same time opened up space for further research. In the future, it would be useful to analyse individual inclusion strategies in different educational contexts in more detail and to explore their long-term impact on pupils, educators and wider society. Given the rapid development of pedagogical methods and technological tools, it can be assumed that inclusive education will continue to change and require constant adaptation and innovation.

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