Primary School Education of an Integrated Learner with Down Syndrome: A Case Study

Bachelor Thesis

Brno, April 2010

Supervisor: Dr. Rita Chalmers Collins  Author: Dana Charvátová
Declaration

I hereby declare that I have worked on the thesis independently and used only the sources listed in the references.

Brno, 18 April 2010. Dana Charvátová
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Dana Charvátová
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Introduction

Each learner is unique and has different educational needs, which is an idea teachers should always be aware of. There are various types of learners and each one requires something diverse for their education to be effective, which is the principle of not only mainstream schools but mainly of integration and inclusion. The idea of educating learners with special needs in mainstream schools instead of having them separated in special schools, both of which include advantages and drawbacks, has spread to many countries. Nevertheless, there is a group of learners requiring special treatment, however, there is not much available and up-to-date information about it in the Czech educational system. The group is learners with the mild or moderate mental disability (National Down Syndrome Society [NDSS], n.d.), Down syndrome.

I have chosen the theme for the bachelor thesis because of several reasons. First, I have always been interested in learners with special educational needs (SEN) so participated in a few courses aimed at this group of learners. Second, I have recently met a young learner with Down syndrome integrated in a mainstream school and I personally find it beneficial for both the learner and her classmates, which is why I would like to discover the advantages and disadvantages of learning in this environment for her educational process and upbringing. The learner has been included in a primary school for two years, which should provide relevant data for the thesis. Third, I think not many teachers and parents have sufficient knowledge about Down syndrome because it is usually not necessary for them so I would like to provide some. I am of the opinion that one can simply not avoid prejudices when considering mental disability since the society had been used to segregate “handicapped people“ not to spoil the “healthy ones“ and this influence still persists, however, by distributing correct information we can avoid making wrong assumptions.

The thesis is divided in two parts - theoretical and practical. The theoretical one offers basic principles of special needs education. It provides information about the multi-track system, its components and brief characteristics of each. Then it describes the difference between integration and inclusion since these concepts are very similar but differ in some aspects. Moreover, it offers advice on what works in inclusive education in chapter 3, and how to treat learners with SEN. Concerning this part, I would like to introduce inclusive education and its benefits for all participants in the
class. Other information the theory includes in chapter 3 is Down syndrome with its characteristics. I wish to present such a learner as a complex individual so that the people meeting the learner know what to expect.

The practical part deals with the issue of a real learner with SEN integrated in a primary school. A case study is used as a means of research, which I elected because of its qualitative value. To create the study, it has been vital to cooperate with the learner’s teachers, mainly the assistant teacher, parents, classmates and of course, the learner herself. I would like to discover how the learner’s education and upbringing improved when being a member of a mainstream school, on the other hand how it influenced other classmates, also what had to be adapted from the general educational plan for the purposes of the learner with Down syndrome and if it was effective, how the role of an assistant teacher was needed in the educational process and so on. The aim of the case study is to back up evidence and assure teachers and parents there is no need in worrying about having a child with SEN integrated into a mainstream school.
Theoretical Part

1 Special needs education

All people have the right to get an education regardless of their different needs, which is an idea shared and supported in many countries all around the world, however, it is not universal. It is incorporated in many laws, those connected with the Czech education are e.g. the School Law 561/2004 Sb., The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union drafted in 2000, Constitution of the Czech Republic of 1992, The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms valid from 1991 (European Agency, n.d; Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy [Ministry of School, Youth and Sport], 2009; Parlament České republiky [Parliament of the Czech Republic]; 1992, European Parliament, n.d.).

1.1 What are special educational needs, their classification

“It is important to explain to people without disability what the different disabilities are, it would help to get rid of a lot of prejudices and it could contribute to ensuring a better understanding ...of others towards us. /Germany/ (cited in Soriano, 2005, p. 65). Learners have SEN if they have substantial difficulties or barriers that make it harder for them to learn what other learners of about the same age are able to learn without difficulties, and if they have problems in development. Learners with SEN are offered extra support and educational aids for their learning to be effective. As Mitchell (2008, p. IX) suggests, there are about 10 – 15 % of learners with SEN in the whole school population, however, SEN are not of the same level but vary in the way they influence learners’ education.

There are several basic types of SEN:

- **learning difficulties** - in acquiring basic skills
- **behavioural, emotional and social difficulties** – a learner may have difficulty in forming social relationships and concentrating on work

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3 Concerning Soriano’s *Young Views on Special Needs Education: Results of The European Parliament Hearing*, there were representatives from different countries participating in the hearing. The nationality of the anonymous author cited is in the slashes
specific learning difficulty - with reading, writing and number work, calling for a more structured approach to learning

speech and language difficulties – a learner may have a particular reason for not being able to speak or is delayed in the development of speech and language skills

communication difficulties - affecting a learner’s ability to understand social communication, social situations and language

physical disability - may be present from birth or arise from injury or illness

medical or health conditions - which may slow down a learner’s progress and/or involve treatment affecting their education

hearing impairment - involving significant hearing loss or deafness which can seriously affect speech and the ability to benefit from normal approaches and engage in conversation with others

visual impairment - where a learner may have been born partially sighted or blind or have become so through an accident, illness or a deteriorating condition (“What are Special Educational Needs“, 2010.)

1.2 Multi-track system

There are three ways of treating learners with SEN, one of them is separating these learners from learners without disabilities by going to special schools, the other is completely opposite - inclusion or integration, the last one is creating a special class in a mainstream school. These three options are called a multi-track system (European Agency, 2009).

1.2.1 Special schools in the Czech Republic

According to Šimůnková et al. (1987, p. 11 - 18), special education and special schools have a long history in our country. The first attempts to establish education for learners with disabilities took place in the second half of the 18th century, when the first institution for the deaf was founded in Prague in 1786. Many changes have been made since that time because of political, cultural and social influence. Broadly speaking, this development is said to be positive because it ameliorated conditions for all learners including those with SEN, e.g. learners were supplied with textbooks and teaching aids were free of charge.
There are a few reasons why learners having a need of special education attend special schools, among which is the fact that some parents or even learners prefer going to a special school for the fact there are many learners with similar SEN, which helps in creating a safer atmosphere for all the learners. Another reason is a mainstream schools’ inability to satisfy the needs of a learner e.g. lack of finance or space to change architectural dispositions.

Special schools are of following types (European Agency, 2009):

- schools for hearing disabled
- schools for visually disabled
- schools for mentally disabled
- schools for physically disabled
- schools for pupils with specific learning and/or behavioural difficulties (only on compulsory educational level)
- schools for children and pupils with speech impairment (pre-school and compulsory education level only)
- schools for pupils with prolonged hospitalisation or chronically sick pupils (pre-school and compulsory educational level only)

1.2.2 Integration and inclusion

These two terms, integration and inclusion, deal with the same idea and some authors consider them identical, while others claim they are a bit different. For expressing one idea, there have been used several terms – normalization, integration, inclusion or mainstreaming, from which normalization is one of the first used nearly 40 years ago and presented care for people with handicaps. If normalization was understood as a way to create normal conditions, it must have been realized there was something wrong in treating people with disabilities, which led to bettering their status. Normalization is described as making available for learners with SEN “patterns of life and conditions for everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of society“ (Nirje, as cited in Mitchell, 2008, p. 28). As Bazalová (2006, p. 7) suggests, this term is known thanks to Scandinavian countries and deals with improving life of people with mental disabilities.
1.2.2.1 Inclusion

*Inclusion* is a broader concept having all learners educated in the same kind of school without previous segregation, it is an opposite of exclusion. Inclusion means there are convenient conditions in society to accept any variety and so each child born is treated the same way, regardless of their SEN. There is a general idea suggesting that it is completely normal to be different and so learners should be treated by teachers like that (Bazalová, 2006, p. 7). This idea is most common for Scandinavian countries. One is interested in how such an idea is implied in educational system if each learner needs variant educational aids. With reference to Mitchell (2008, pp. 7 - 8), he answers the question whether learners with SEN require distinctive teaching strategies by both yes and no. There are some learners who do need them, for instance deaf learners must have adapted communication, however, most learners with SEN require just good teaching because it is appropriate for all learners, even with some modifications.

1.2.2.2 Integration

*Integration*, on the other hand, could be described as a narrower idea of inclusion, which is complex. Integration means “the making up or composition of a whole by adding together or combining separate parts“ (Little, 2002, p. 1395), which is a general meaning but applies also to education well. In other words, there exist special schools as well as mainstream ones and learners of the first mentioned group become members of mainstreaming, which is a desirable objective of modern educational strategies. Contrary to inclusion, learners with SEN are not immediately considered the very same as learners without SEN but the aim is to create a heterogeneous group in abilities, however, homogeneous in rights.

There are two main kinds of school integration:

- *individual* – a learner is integrated into a mainstream school class and offered extra help if needed
- *group* – there is created a special class in a mainstream school for a group of learners with similar or same SEN
1.3 Integration in the Czech Republic

The idea of integration in the Czech Republic started in 1989, a breaking year in history and society. Prior to that significant year learners with SEN had difficult or restricted access to education, whereas later on the development of integrative policy changed it positively. From a broader point of view, as the society was changing, so was the educational system (European Agency, 2009). This was an essential point because when learners with SEN are planned to be integrated, it is always necessary to restrict negative influence on them and create positive atmosphere and the feeling of being welcome.

Bazalová (2006, pp. 6 – 7) affirms that there was a transformational process in 1989 changing attitude to education, which influenced perception of learners with SEN – from that year on, all of them were to be provided adequate education in mainstream schools rather than in special ones.

Despite general effort to integrate a lot of learners with SEN into mainstream schools, it has not yet been so successful due to several factors, e.g. lack of sources for getting teaching aids or support for teachers, teachers’ (or people’s in general) limited point of view on special needs, architectural barriers making the school inaccessible for learners with physical disability and others.
2. Inclusion in use

As it was already mentioned, the terms inclusion and integration may vary or be the same depending on the point of view of their user but the idea is same so for the purpose of its description in use, inclusion is here used as a general term.

To be successful in applying inclusion, there are some aspect that have to be taken into account. Not each educational system or society as such is able to apply inclusive strategies because there are obstacles in putting them in use and furthermore, not every society is willing to accept learners with SEN. There are many benefits of having learners with SEN experience mainstreaming for each participant of the process and so inclusive education is a trend in nowadays schools. There is information like:

The overall goal is to ensure that school is a place where all children participate and are treated equally. This involves a change in how we think about education. Inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It means enhancing the quality of education by improving the effectiveness of teachers, promoting learning-centred methodologies, developing appropriate textbooks and learning materials and ensuring that schools are ... for all children. Strengthening links with the community is also vital: relationship between teachers, students, parents and society at large are crucial for developing inclusive learning environments (UNESCO, n.d.).

2.1 Inclusive education formula

According to Mitchell (2008, p. 29 – 35), inclusive education has to be comprised of several elements to be successful and there is a formula expressing the process:

\[
\text{Inclusive Education} = V + P + 5\text{As} + S + R + L
\]

where V is vision, P means placement, 5As stand for adapted curriculum, adapted assessment, adapted teaching, acceptance, access, S is for support, R means resources and L is leadership. All of these elements are present also in education of learners without SEN, however, while considering learners with SEN are of even more importance.
2.1.1 Vision

Vision is symbolically placed as the first element in the formula because first there must have been an idea and only then it was practiced. It is clear that inclusive education needs participation of teachers, from extended point of view of educators, at all levels of educational scale to not only practice inclusive ideas, but also to think about them, then try to objectively assess them and adjust if they do not work as they should.

2.1.2 Placement

It is central for learners with SEN to be members of mainstream schools to fulfill inclusive aims, however, not all schools are able or willing to accept those learners, nevertheless, there may be schools practicing inclusive policy but their disadvantage is their location – these are far away from learner's home, which brings many difficulties. That is why schools should be in learners' neighbourhood and with classmates of adequate age. “It is good for all pupils with disabilities to belong to an ordinary school close to their homes. It is good to live with your parents and to know people and pupils in the society where you live.../Sweden” (cited in Soriano, 2005, p. 67).

2.1.3 Adapted curriculum

Creating of adapted curriculum is one of the most challenging and problematic features of inclusion since it is difficult to bear in mind needs of learners with no SEN and those who experience them the same time. Ideally, there is one curriculum applicable to all learners but it is demanding for teachers to make such curricula when they are not trained as professionals or do not have experience.

2.1.4 Adapted assessment

What learners are usually afraid of most is being assessed, which is why assessment has to be motivating in connection with all learners but mainly when considering learners with SEN not to lose their positive attitude towards learning. Evaluation is desirable to be positive, instead of being aimed at failures it should highlight success and provide learners and their parents feedback in order to be able to monitor learning.
2.1.5 Adapted teaching

“It is very important to have specialized teachers. Also it is important that knowledge and experience is built up in...schools /Iceland/“ (cited in Soriano, 2005, p. 65). Inclusive education is challenging for teachers because of the fact they have to acquire extensive variety of teaching strategies and techniques to reach their objectives. Teachers are asked to practice cooperative learning, build up supportive atmosphere, be able to catch the learners’ attention, be aware of features causing problems and be able to react to them properly. All of these mentioned features appear in teaching of all kinds of learners, however, in connection with learners with SEN it is a bit different because teachers have to study new information and techniques, for instance when there is a learner with mental impairment, their teachers should learn how to cope with it.

2.1.6 Acceptance

For inclusion to be successful it is necessary that teachers, learners and their parents accept learners with SEN as members of mainstream schools and what is more, are willing to give them succor. It is not sufficient when learners with SEN are included but just tolerated or even detached, which could lead to deterioration of their situation. Acceptance involves active participation of educational process members.

2.1.7 Access

According to inclusive policy, all learners have equal rights, thus access for learners with SEN must be established. It is not effortless to create access convenient for all learners, for example if there are changes in architectural dispositions of a school made for better accessibility of learners with physical disabilities, this could mean the opposite for learners with visual impairment who are used to having some conductive features.

2.1.8 Support

Support is vital in mainstreaming and that is why there are professionals trained in offering aids for different SEN. Each learner with SEN requires a variety of support, e.g. some learners need an assistant teacher to help them all the time, on the other hand, other may just regularly visit a speech therapist. Not only learners but also teachers have a need of support:
Support is mainly provided by specialist teachers or other professionals, such as psychologists. They provide advice and support to class teachers, parents and direct support to the included pupil. Support is provided through special educational centres or pedagogical psychological advice centres according to the specification of the pupil’s need. These specialist advice and guidance centres are in charge of determining, proposing and providing support and of elaborating the individual educational plan in close cooperation with the class teacher, the parents and the pupil (in accordance with his/her impairment and level of active participation). (Meijer, Soriano, Watkins, 2003, p. 28).

“All people with developmental disabilities, including those with severe developmental behavioral and health impairments can live successfully in the community if appropriately supported.“ (Pijl, Meijer, Hegarty, 1997, p. 15)

2.1.9 Resources

To understand inclusive education and be aware of its principles, one has to get information. Many resources have been published since the time inclusive policy became popular and have been available in various languages. There is a number of ways to acquire the resources like to get them printed, electronically or participate in a seminar devoted to inclusion ideas. One has to be aware of the fact that not all of the resources are relevant or of high quality, e.g. those got on the Internet, so we should rely only on credible resources, which is for example the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

2.1.10 Leadership

The last mentioned element of inclusive formula is as important as others and describes the need of strong leaders in positions influencing educational system such as the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, school principals and teachers, being able to understand, explain and apply inclusion. There may be a situation in which they will be asked to defend inclusive ideas so they have to be ready to offer relevant information.

2.2 Inclusion participants and their benefits

All renowned experts claim that inclusion brings improvement in many areas for each participant, which is why inclusive policy has been so appreciated in many countries. The ways how and why they are influenced differ from one personality to
another but all in all, people experiencing inclusion have the chance to become sensitive members of society without prejudices.

2.2.1 Learners with SEN

Learners having SEN may experience several kinds of feelings due to inclusion, among which is for instance happiness, sense of equality, frustration or regret, but all of these are inevitable in real life situations, thus learners should be prepared for them and schools should be a safe environment where to first encounter and challenge them. It could be considered beneficial that learners with SEN experience the feeling of being members of real society and get used to its various reactions.

Inclusive policy improves learners’ motivation since they wish to participate in all activities as their classmates and have the same tasks, which is sometimes not possible, nevertheless, their enthusiasm is highly appreciated. Learners with SEN simply learn to be members of a multi-abilities community. If they were educated in special schools, they would not get such an opportunity, moreover they could imitate behavior of other learners with SEN, which could lead to deteriorating their own situation. As Pijl et al. (1997, p. 15 - 16) claim, “The evidence and experience indicate that life in the community is better than life in institutions in terms of relationships, family contact, frequency and diversity of relationships, individual development and leisure, recreational and spiritual resources.”

2.2.2 Classmates of learners with SEN

Learners being given the chance to meet learners with SEN have many advantages in their life. They realize all human beings differ in some aspects but equal in their rights and learn to accept and help them, which leads to sensitive understanding of one’s limitations without prejudice (Raschke & Bronson, n.d.).

2.2.3 Society practicing inclusion

“People with disabilities need to have the possibility to participate in society equally with anybody else... /Norway/.” (cited in Soriano, 2005, p. 63) Members of society using inclusive policy are offered a unique chance to create environment in which all participants are able to appreciate one’s abilities and strengths and are empathetic. Such a society does not separate people with disabilities but behaves vice
versa, which brings diversity and there should also be a sense of equality, however, as a learner with SEN from Norway claim:

Disabled people are still not treated equally in every way...A very important thing for disabled people all over the world is to be and live like most ‘normal’ people live. To make this possible, we have to work on people’s attitude and maybe do something so that the people who are not disabled get the chance to know disabled people more. (ibid., p. 65)
3. Down syndrome

One should always be aware of the fact that each person is unique, even if they look, speak or behave in different way than we are used to, and that is why they should be treated equally. Nevertheless, there has always been prejudice against non-standard people and only those who are not satisfied with information having been told to them but who are instead of that interested in real personality and causes of problems can discover how exceptional people with Down syndrome (hereon DS) can be, despite their mental difficulty, which can never be cured.

3.1 Etiology of DS

As Manfredini (2000, p. 1 – 2) explains, the features of DS were first described in 1866 by an English physician, Dr. John Langdon Haydon Down, after whom the syndrome got its name as we know it nowadays. At that time, it was not known what caused the syndrome, but Dr. Down detected a certain pattern of altered development of some people. DS was explained to be a racial deviation and thus called mongolism. After some time, scientists realized DS appeared among all ethnic groups, both rich and poor, so they proposed many explanations of DS. “The explanations were of different type and different value. Some were based on observations; others were based more on speculation. Some contained a trace of truth; others did not…In general the theories reflected the thinking of the times.“ (Warkany, cited in Koch, de la Cruz, 1973, p. 10).

It was Dr. Jerome Lejeune and his co-workers who in 1959 found there was a change in genetic material of people having DS in comparison to others. There usually was an extra chromosome in their cells causing the people did not have 46 chromosomes in each cell but 47 instead. The extra chromosome most often appeared in the 21st pair, the term Trisomy 21 was therefore used. We do not know what causes the improper cell division, however, it is believed that the extra chromosome comes either from an egg or a sperm during the cell division (Manfredini, 2000, p. 1 - 2). About 95% cases of DS are those of Trisomy 21, then there are also two minor types – Mosaicism and Translocation (About Down Syndrome, n.d.). Kääriäinen (1975, p. 2) suggests DS was the first known chromosomal abnormality of the human being.

Due to the fact that DS is proved to exist from the very beginning of pregnancy when the cells divide for the first time, from the prenatal period, it has already
disappeared the common myth that DS can be caused by a mother’s illness or injury when being pregnant, which could cause the mother’s psychical problems of accusing herself from being responsible for her child’s difficulty.

3.2 Frequency of occurrence

DS appears all around the world regardless of mothers’ nationality, class or religious belief, moreover, such children are born each day. According to National Down Syndrome Society, one in every 800 babies is born with DS ([NDSS], n.d.), however, “75% to 85% of embryos with trisomy 21 are spontaneously aborted“ (Pueschel & Thuline, cited in Matson & Mulick, 1991, p. 123). As we still do not know why DS occurs, it is not possible to estimate to whom a child with DS will be born, however, the possibility of having a child with DS increases with a mother’s age. DS occurs once in 1500 – 2000 births when the mother’s age is under 25, at the age of 35, it appears once in 350 births, a few years later, a 40-year-old mother has one to 100 chance to have a child with DS and the possibility of one to 30 is at the age of 45 and more (Manfredini, 1988, p. 3; NDSS, n.d.), which clearly shows that couples should not postpone parenting much if they wish to have the lowest chance of having a child with mental difficulty.

3.3 Diagnosis

As it was already mentioned, children with DS are born relatively frequently moreover, DS is the most common mental difficulty that can be diagnosed in prenatal period. One could be interested in the ways to do such a diagnosis. It is called amniocentesis and is done by withdrawing amniotic fluid and subsequent analysis of it around the 14th week of pregnancy. There are not only indisputable benefits of amniocentesis but also risky drawbacks since it can be connected with potential complications, e.g. damage the fetus’ development or even cause loss of pregnancy. Nevertheless, it is recommended to undergo amniocentesis when the mother’s age is over 35 or when there is a history of DS in the family (Manfredini, 1988, p. 4; Kaback & Leisti, in Koch & de la Cruz, 1975, pp. 49 – 52, 61).

Being aware of the existence of amniocentesis, one should not forget the way when and how parents are informed about the mental difficulty of their child. We can only argue if it is better for parents to know the diagnosis that they are expecting a child
with DS as soon as possible, or to be informed right after the child’s delivery. The first mentioned option means that parents after undergoing amniocentesis can make a decision to have a child with DS or not, which one should not criticize because one can never know, until they are in the same situation, how parents looking forward to a healthy child feel when being informed about DS. As the worst possibility for parents seems to be aware of the fact there is something wrong with their newborn child but the explanation and needed information comes late, which should not happen.

Concerning the diagnosis of DS, it should always be conveyed tactfully and with respect to parents because they have to cope with the new situation and the way they are informed about DS may influence either acceptance of their child’s difficulty or denial or even refusal.

### 3.4 Characteristics of individuals with DS

All people are unique and differ from others in some areas while being same in other, have various desires and needs, thus also each person with DS is an exceptional individual, which is the truth one should always be aware of and treat them with respect to it, but still, there are some aspects people with DS have in common and that are typical of them.

#### 3.4.1 Physical characteristics

There are several physical features the people with DS share, among which could be counted the visible characteristics of a head. As Manfredini (1988, p. 2 - 3) and Sanger (in Koch, de la Cruz, 1975, p. 33 – 45) suggest, the skull is rather small and the back of the head is flattened in comparison to the prominent forehead. The nasal bridge is described as flattened and broad, while the nose and also ears are both small and short. Concerning the eyes, these are almond-shaped in many cases with small skin folds in the inner eye corners, the eyelids may be slanted. As for the oral cavity, there are several characteristics typical for DS, e.g. enlarged and fissured tongue, bones degeneration, teeth anomalies and so on.

To focus on the rest of the body, the hands and feet are small and the average height is also lower. In general, people with DS have reduced muscle strength and tone, which often leads to not only visible differences between individuals with DS and
others concerning tongue and lips in the early age, but also slower and problematic
development of gross and fine motor skills.

When a person has DS, they usually suffer from affiliated problems such as
heart disease and sometimes bowels’ blockage, hearing deficits since their inner part of
ears is narrower and shorter or visual problems, which can cause more serious problems
that DS as such. Mainly heart problems cause many children to die soon but in general,
the quality of treatment and enough information has lengthened the average life
expectancy from 25 in 1983 to 60 in these days (NDSS, n.d.).

3.4.2 Mental and social characteristics

DS is a mental difficulty when each individual has a mental deficient to some
degree, mild (IQ level of 52 – 67) or moderate (IQ 36 – 51) (Tymchuk, 1975, p. 67),
thus it effects development of brain. Each child’s brain and abilities develop from the
beginning of their life, so it is with children with DS, only slower and to some limits.
Each child has their potential and it is vital to support them to reach their maximum. For
children with DS, it is not easy to learn advanced skills as abstract thinking, however,
the goal is to exploit the child’s potential and not to force them do activities above it.
They are capable to learn to walk, communicate and speak, and master the daily
routines such as to care about themselves. Children with DS need to live in stimulating
environment as a family surely is to be motivated in their development (Smith, Wilson,

According to Kääriäinen (1975, p. 14), children with DS have intensive life of
emotions, however, the higher positive reaction tendency they have when being
compared to other children, the higher negative reaction they are said to offer on the
other hand, but their moods tend to disappear quicker. What is described as the most
problematic and unpleasant feature of their emotionality is stubbornness. Smith and
Wilson (1973, p. 40) think that, “They can sometimes be extremely obstinate and
determined to have their own way. This calls for perseverance and firmness on the part
of parents; it is important to establish discipline early, and to make clear who is boss.“
3.5 Integration – possible or not?

Education is a necessary part of all people’s life, those with DS are not an exception and thus should not be excluded and there are two ways for them to be educated, either in special schools or being mainstreamed. As it was already mentioned in the chapters devoted to integration and inclusion, it is beneficial for all participants to experience integration, however, it depends on parents, teachers and professionals from specialized centres if they decide whether to integrate the child with DS into a mainstream school or not since not for each individual it is an advantage, moreover, some simply cannot be integrated from various reasons.

*Special pedagogical centres* provide diagnosis, consultations, aids and help with children with DS and offer advice whether an individual is appropriate for integration or not, what changes they need to be done in education to be effective and help to create individual educational plan, argue if the individual requires an assistant teacher and so on.

To conclude, if the individual’s characteristics allow them to be integrated, it brings many benefits in spite of the fact that such a decision and consequences are not effortless, but the children with DS are highly motivated when being members of a mainstream school to reach the best they are able to.
Practical Part

4. A case study

4.1 Introduction

There are two similar concepts of having the learners with SEN educated in the mainstream schools, integration and inclusion. It has already been explained that according to some people, these two terms are equal, however, others consider them to vary in some aspects. I am of the opinion that inclusion should be interpreted as the broader concept and that is why I incline to the use of integration as a more specific term in the Czech educational system, where this term is often used probably because of the fact there does not exist an ideal society in which it is believed that to be different is normal, which is one of the basic features the description of inclusive policy consists of.

Having briefly described in previous chapters the history, development and ideas of the modern educational phenomenon referred to as integration, it would be desirable to offer also information either confirming or denying the theory and compare it with the practical course of events, which is the reason why I have decided to do research on integration in use. I do not think it would be sufficient just to summarize available theoretical data since integration is very much connected with the society in which people experience it, which is why I chose a case study – it is more personal than quantitative questionnaires for instance, and it should also provide specific and detailed information about the case, however, and consequently could be made use of it to make a general statement.

I have been personally interested in this topic because I know many integrated learners with SEN and am aware of the situation they face. It is easy neither for themselves nor for the others since they are still getting used to meeting each other and reacting properly. I would say that learners with SEN have a much more complicated role in the process because they still have to prove they have the same rights as others and struggle for them. In spite of the existence of laws supporting learners with SEN, which should provide certainty that these learners do not have to advocate for themselves, not every member of the society is obliged to accept them and some might perceive people with disabilities as inferior.
From my point of view, special attention should be devoted to the learner with DS integrated into a mainstream school in her village because when one is asked what kind of difficulty they consider to be the worst, they probably most often answer the intellectual one, which may be caused by the opinion that intellectual conditions affect the lower quality of life or because of the difficult mutual communication or some prejudice and assumptions. One might claim that such learners do not deserve as much attention as others because there will never be a trace of progress in their education and development, however, this is not true at all, which the case study should prove.

4.2 Aims of the case study

The objective of the case study is to provide a collection and evaluation of data concerning integrative policy dealing with a learner with DS. I compared theoretical knowledge with the practical use because it might be misleading for one to study the theory and rely on the offered information and then be confronted with reality, which is never the very same as theory because real human beings take part in it and therefore influence it, either deliberately or unintentionally. There is no doubt that theoretical ideas are basic for integration, however, only in real schools do we realize what is needed to be thought over again and what has to be done to fulfill its intended purpose. As for myself, I was not really sure what to expect after having studied the materials about integration and Down syndrome because I could not absorb what strategies would work.

Then, I concentrated on the learner herself and her interaction with other members of the class. I wanted to find out how the interaction worked when the learner with Down syndrome is concerned. The aim was to observe the class as a whole and find out how the presence of the learner with SEN influenced the classwork, if it did. I expected that the learner would distract the other learners‘ and teacher’s attention because of her inability to concentrate for a longer period of time, leading to a frequent change of activities connected with movement in the class. I assumed that other members would tolerate the learner with SEN but not accept her as an equal partner for all kinds of activities. I also expected some learners to segregate the learner with SEN from the “classroom community“ and probably even bully her since quite often occurs that the learners who are somehow different are not treated well.
Concerning the learner’s education, I assumed there would be an assistant teacher always present and offering help to the learner as I had been told that the assistant teachers are needed all the time in the cases of mental difficulties. In fact, I did not know how it works in use when there is an integrated learner with intellectual difficulty and could not even think about the methods used for her education to be effective. I wished to find out the routines in the learner’s education.

I also focused on the assistant teacher’s role in the integrative process, the aim was to confirm or displace by evidence if they are really needed in the class, what is their daily job and if they helped the learner with DS to be educated more that without their presence in the class. I was interested in the way the assistant teacher motivated the learner and if it was successful.

Last but not least, I wanted to prove that despite the undeniable existence of some difficulties, the learner must have benefited from being integrated as well as her classmates and describe how. I tried to discover in what areas the learner with SEN improved and to what degree the integrative policy influenced it. I wanted to support the statement that integration brings better social acceptance and understanding and therefore should be applied in as many schools and countries as possible.

4.3 Information about the learner with DS

For the purposes of the case study, there was certain information provided by the learner's mother M. R. (personal communication, March 17, 2010), assistant teacher Mgr. H. Křivánková (personal communication, March 15 - 19, 2010) and the headmaster of the primary school in Telnice, Mgr. L. Bimová (personal communication, March 15 - 16, 2010) that one should be aware of concerning the learner, A. R., a 10-year-old girl who has DS. Having gone through a series of check-ups to specify A.’s intellectual disability, it was found out that A.’s level of IQ was on the border of mild and moderate.

She lives with her family in Telnice, a village near Brno, and attends a local primary school. A. is the youngest child in the family, she has four sisters and a brother, none of them with any intellectual difficulty. A. lives in the complete family where all its members support her and wish to develop her abilities on one hand but on the other, they mainly want her to be happy, which is crucial. A. is not treated like a child with an
intellectual difficulty and the family does not meet with other families having a child with DS since they do not wish to perceive A. unlike her siblings.

A. is fully supported but also led to independence and responsibility, which should be taken into account since there are parents that treat their children with SEN inadequately – do not sustain them in their progress. A. is not left out from any activities important for the family, which effects her developing self-confidence. A. comes to the school each day with her mother, who takes the advantage of the time to consult about A.’s education, which is profitable for both the teachers and the mother because they can react to diverse situations immediatelly. The cooperation of the school with A.’s family was vital fot the reason that in the case of DS, homepreparation and homestudy were necessary to achieve some progress.

A. needed to have daily routines but if these were broken, she felt unsure, which could lead to her misbehaving. To give an instance of such a situation, A. was used to going to the school with her mother and then going to her class, where the assistant teacher was present. Once it happened the AT was not there, resulting in A.’s poor concentration.

4.4 Integration versus special school

The family lives in the village where all residents know each other well, which was one of the reasons for A.’s integration. When making the decision whether to enlist A. in a special school in Brno or integrate her in the local school, the parents hesitated at first, the father preferred having A. educated in the special school, however, the mother wanted her to attend the local school. They considered carefully the advantages and drawbacks of both options and finally decided to choose the local primary school since they wanted A. to know local children and vice versa because it is always vital for each child to grow up with their peers in their natural background.

The parents were aware of the benefits of special schools, e.g. specialized teachers, treatment and equipment, but they had already experienced how it worked in one of these schools when A. attended a special kindergarten in Brno. There were children with different kinds of SEN, however, A. was not motivated there enough. Other disadvantage was that A.'s father had to take her each day to Brno and later back home, which was demanding not only for the father but mainly for A. Another
drawback to mention here was that A. did not go to the same kindergarten as her peers, which prevented them from better understanding each other. This was the most striking point influencing the parents' decision because they wished A. to socialize as much as possible in the community where she spent the majority of her time (personal communication with the learner’s mother, March 17, 2010).

I personally consider the decision to enroll A. in the mainstream school advantageous for the fact the parents wished A. to be educated as other learners and to benefit from being among them, yet it was a bit courageous because no one can ever know how the others will respond. It could happen that the other learners would not accept her but mistreat and A. would meet them all the time in the village, which would probably cause unpleasant feelings for her. Fortunately, this version did not happen and A. fully benefit from being integrated.

4.5 Primary school in Telnice

The primary school in Telnice is a small institution with a rich history, it was founded in 1889 and it underwent a series of changes. Now the school offers only four years of primary education because of the space deficit concerning the school building, however, this is planned to be changed. There are 15 learners in each class on average including two integrated learners with SEN in the second grade (L. Bímová, personal communication, March 15 - 16, 2010). This school is directed by a charismatic headmaster with a long teaching history, thus reasonable and sensitive to the learners' needs. There is a positive atmosphere in the school offering supportive and motivating environment (see Appendix A, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4). The learners are encouraged to try various kinds of activities without being underestimated to be aware of diversity but also possible dangers.

When one comes to the school, they feel welcomed because there is a friendly atmosphere typical for villages, pictures and other works of the learners are visible. Moreover, there is a combination of modern technologies, e.g. an interactive board, and competent classic aids like tables with the block letters corresponding with the spelt ones, from which the learners fully benefit.
4.5.1 View on integration

According to the personal conversation with the head-master (March 15 - 16, 2010), prior to the school year 2008/2009, the school did not have any experience with integration in their school, however, when the family of A. wanted her to attend the primary school, the head-master agreed almost without hesitating. As she admitted, she had some apprehension about integration of the learner with DS but did not expect it to bring serious problems. She commented it with the words "we shall see". In spite of the lack of practical experience, the school was aware of the fact that learners with SEN had the legal right to attend the mainstream school so they completely supported it. Finally, two learners with SEN were planned to be integrated.

Before the integration took place, the school decided to create a preparatory course called *Looking forward to school* for the learners to get to know each other well before spending four to five hours a day together. The children were aware of the fact there lived a child with disability in their village, yet it was sought-after to introduce them in more detail. The course was held for three months, from March to May, and the learners got used to meeting each other, which led to lower occurrence of disturbance in the lessons because of the presence of learners with SEN, it would probably be much more frequent without having undergone the course. The teachers explained the learners that one of their classmates used a wheelchair and other had an intellectual difficulty, however, it was highlighted none of these difficulties should evoke inconvenience because these learners were just different.

4.5.2 Attitude towards parents

Not only the learners but also their parents were of course informed about the planned integration of two learners with SEN, one of them with DS and the other using a wheelchair, however, the head-master did not ask every single parent if they agreed with the fact their child would attend the same class as the learners with SEN not to cause unnecessary difficulties. The parents had a chance to declare their opinion resulting in the agreement with integration, in other words, none of the parents expressed disagreement, not even after months of its implementation. Yet if it had happened that a parent had come and complained about the existence of integration, the head-master (personal communication, March 15 - 16, 2010) would have asked them to
imagine a possible situation that their child would have had an accident or illness leading to SEN, which could happen anytime, and then they surely would have wanted them to attend the local school if possible. Her aim would not have been to frighten the parent but to have reminded them of the difficulty of such a situation to personalize it, which I would consider to be the right strategy.

4.5.3 Bell

It was quite extraordinary to experience a school where the bell rang only to signal the first class at eight o’clock and then, during the whole school, it was up to the teachers to decide when the learners had breaks. The teachers were supposed to either prolong the lesson or shorten it so that it was suitable for both the teacher and the learners. This did not mean there was a break anytime, it was more or less after a 45-minute long period but with respect to different kinds of purposes.

Such an order resulted in a more convenient arrangement for all learners because they were not restless like learners at other schools a while before the bell rang, besides, it was appropriate for A. for the fact it was sometimes tricky to motivate her for learning and if the bell rang at the moment when the AT succeeded in the encouraging effort, it would be completely spoilt. All in all, the bell was considered a disturbing element and as for me, I did agree with it since I had the opportunity to experience the real situation, which was much more relaxed that at schools where the bell rang.

4.6. What had to be adapted

If a school is to integrate a learner with SEN, it is not effortless for the changes the school has to implement in their general educational strategies and materials. The preparatory course was not the only adaptation the school of Telnice did because of the integration process as it was necessary to find out how to educate the learner with DS, to what extent, what should not be done and so on.

4.6.1 Before the realization of integration

First of all, it is crucial to make a decision if the learner was able to be integrated. It is a common process for the parents who wish their child to be integrated to undergo a series of investigation in the special pedagogical centre to set if it is more convenient for the child to attend special school, be individually integrated or to choose
group integration, all of these criteria are created to suit best to a learner and their SEN type and individuality. A. was recommended to be individually integrated to Telnice primary school with the help of an assistant teacher, which was approved by the region. The approval is valid for just one school year, which leads to the repetition of the process.

According to the head-master (personal communication, March 15 - 16, 2010) and A.'s mother, this was the first and also last cooperation between the school and the centre, unfortunately. The school asked them to come to see A.'s integration and review if it worked properly, or consequently to suggest changes for higher effectiveness of A.'s education, however, no one from the centre arrived personally. The head-master claimed she did not wish to make mistakes in the particular integration process, which was why she wanted the professionals to observe A. in the real class situations and correct possible inaccuracies from the very beginning.

4.6.2 Assistant teacher

It was advised that A. had an assistant teacher (hereon AT) for four to five hours a day to help A. when she needed it and to motivate her all the time. In the first grade, as A.'s mother (personal communication, March 17, 2010), said, A. had the first AT who, unfortunately, did not manage to cope with A. and her behavior. The AT was too easy on A. leading to not working communication and cooperation, which is the reason why the AT left after a few months. This fact proved that the AT's job was demanding physically as well as psychologically. Nevertheless, not anyone could be the AT since it required a strong personality able to be strict enough to make A. learn but also willing to cuddle her because A. is not an aggressive child with DS but only stubborn, however, she always needed to have proof that people around her supported and loved her.

4.6.2.1 Current assistant teacher

A.'s current AT is H. Křivánková, who does not have a background in special pedagogy, however, she managed her duties well and was much-favoured among all the learners, even though she was quite strict. This might have been caused by the fact that she did express her positive attitude towards the learners and treated them more like partners than children. The AT and A. got used to each other approximately after the first month, which led to building up of confidence, which was highly appreciated in the
case of the learner with DS. Even if A. was reproved, she was aware of the fact that she could come to her AT and cuddle with her, which happened several times a day.

4.6.2.1.1 Assistant teacher’s role

ATs are a beneficial element in classes since they do not help just the learners with SEN but all learners. It would not probably be manageable for the majority of class teachers to cope with the class as a whole without the support of an AT. I do not wish to suggest that teachers are not able to do such work, however, I think that most teachers would welcome the AT’s help, for example when the learner with SEN was given a different task than other learners and needed help as well as other learners (see Appendix A, Fig. 5, 6). The AT’s role in the class was important for the fact that A. needed to be motivated and stimulated all the time and it was up to the AT to find out what she liked and what irritated her on the other hand. The AT’s responsibility was also to realize when A. needed to relax alone, however, when it was desirable to cheer her up or be strict with her, which was not easy to make the right decision. Nevertheless, to be firm was necessary with A. for her education even if the AT respected the intellectual limits, but still A. could not be allowed to do anything she wanted, which did good to A. because she was taught to be independent. If A. needed to leave the room because of either being bored or tired, she could go to the school’s climbing wall (see Appendix A, Fig. 7), rest for a while and continue in learning, without distracting other learners.

In case of the learner with DS, the presence of the AT in the class was vital because one would ever know when A. decided to leave the class, or just lay down on the desk because of tiredness or stop working out her task and go to her “growlery”2 (see Appendix A, Fig. 8, 9), however, the AT was in charge of A. so that she should have always been able to monitor what A. did.

It may seem curious but there were details influencing A.’s education or even causing her refusal to learn, which need not be even connected with education as such or with the school. It is the duty of a good AT to find out what the details are and prevent them from happening. To give an example, one could not imagine what

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2 A small room connected with the A.’s class where many things for different purposes are placed. The “growlery” is separated by a curtain so that the teacher and mainly AT had continuous control of A.’ s activities.
problems could cause such an ordinary thing as snack for a child with DS – A. was used to having the same food and drink each day, but when not, there was a problem.

4.6.2.1.2 Assistant teacher’s methods

It is up to each AT to create individual methods they could use with the learners with SEN they are in charge of because the higher number of the learners with SEN there are, the more different techniques should be made to be applied. After some time of getting to know each other, the AT worked out the system of behavior and treatment to motivate A. in learning. If A. kept refusing to continue in fulfilling her task, the AT would use her approved methods to make A. work, among which could be counted to give A. the big mark 5 in the exercisebook, threaten A. with her own leaving of the school for the rest of a day or the last possibility to try was to ban A. to go swimming with the class, which was the worst for A.

As it was already mentioned, A. needed to be continuously motivated, which was a crucial element in her education. A.’s intellectual disability made it difficult for her to concentrate for a long period of time and to do tasks commonly performed by other learners. She was allowed to change activities without being criticised because such an attitude would cause only problems and the typical reaction of the stubborn learner. It was essential to catch A.’s attention by diverse means and untie it from the activity having caused the troubles. Some of these were drawing (see Fig. 10, 11, 12), lying on the carpet (Appendix A, Fig. 13, 14) playing with the foam cubes or reading books, however, all of these activities were interconnected with learning or rather revising in some way.

As A. wanted to have the same tasks as her classmates, otherwise reacted in a bad way when she realized she was given something altered, it was a bit demanding for the AT to still explain why she had different ones so for instance in mathematics, the AT created an exercisebook having the identical cover as those of other learners but the content was not the same (see Appendix A, Fig. 15) to correspond with A.’s abilities. According to the AT, this “trick” was not that successful as at the beginning of its use due to A.’s ability to became conscious of that even if the exercisebooks looked same, the content was different, which she realized when she did not find the same picture in it.
as her classmate had. This only proved that A. is a clever learner aware of what is happening around her, who could not be deluded easily even if it was done to help her.

4.6.3 Individual educational program

To have an adapted curriculum convenient for the learner with DS, it was necessary to work out an individual educational program (hereon IEP) for A. for each school year. There are several people who should participate in putting it together, these should be a professional representative of a special pedagogical centre, a head-master of the institution the learner with SEN is integrated in, a class teacher, an assistant teacher, parents of the learner with SEN and if it is possible, also the learner, all of these should suggest their ideas and agree on a plan how to reach the aims, moreover, they should also offer neccessary educational aids.

All the same, this is just a theoretical description of how IEP should work out, but it was created differently. It was A.’s class teacher, assistant teacher and head-master who created the IEP (see Appendix B). The school discussed the IEP with A.’s parents, who agreed on it but had not been involved much during the process of creating the IEP because they believed the teachers as professionals to be able to offer a plan of a high quality. IEP consists of several parts starting with an introduction of A.’s characteristics and pedagogical diagnosis, then there are following sections dealing with A.’s subjects described in detail mainly for the teachers and parents to be able to monitor A.’s progress and development. As the head-master (personal communication, March 15 - 16, 2010) admitted, A. mastered the IEP for the first year without difficulties, which could mean that integration was successful with respect to education or that the IEP might have underestimated A.’s abilities and she could do better, nevertheless, the reason may become clearer when A. will have finished her second grade and there will be enough information to compare with A.’s achievement from the first grade.

4.6.3.1 Czech

As for the Czech language, it was mentioned in A.’s IEP that after her first school year, she knew and could read all the capital and small letters, both block and cursive ones, she was able to read and also was aware of the meaning of both the written and read texts. A. could write about half of cursive letters, except those difficult ones. This could be caused by the fact that as the head-masted (personal communication,
March 15 - 16, 2010) explained, the class used a *genetic method* of reading when learners first read and write only big block letters, then learn to spell the words instead of syllabifying, then continue by learning small block letters and practice reading, leading to the learners’ ability to read after three months. This method was convenient for A. since she did not mix block and cursive letters. It was planned for the second year of A.’s learning to revise and develop what she had learnt. Concerning Czech, the AT mentioned that A. was excellent in dividing words into syllables (see Appendix A, Fig. 16, 17), copying words or only parts of them (see Appendix A, Fig. 18). Even though A.’s handwriting was not excellent because of not very good fine motor skills, it was legible most of the times (see Appendix A, Fig. 19), however, it was often influenced by A.’s mood.

Before having experienced A.’s work in the class, I was not really convinced that A.’s class teacher and AT statement was possible - they claimed that A. could read texts with understanding, yet I was not sure if they were right because A. had some speech difficulties that made it complicated for others to understand what she read, however, when I concentrated well I realized A. could read aloud and understand the text without making it out, it was read just differently than one is used to. Still, A. enjoyed reading books much and it was the most frequent activity she did instead of those her classmates were asked to do, which demonstrated she was interested in doing reasonable activities.

4.6.3.2 Mathematics

After the first year in school, A. was able to master many features, e.g. to work in the number of components to 7, to define geometric figures, distinguish between up and down, left and right, however, it was always helpful to create an exercise corresponding with her intellectual level to reach better results, which could be for instance pictures (see Appendix A, Fig. 20, 21, 22). One of the aims of the second grade was to be able to operate with numbers to 10, which the AT did not consider very problematic. Nevertheless, mathematics was not trouble-free for any of the learners, thus A. was provided with visual aids to simplify it, these were for instance the “two-kind setting” of an example (4 + 2 and under it ••• + ••). For the first time I saw it, I did not understand why there were dots under numbers, however, after observing A. counting the dots, I finally realized their purpose.
4.6.3.3 Working activities

A. liked manual work and was as good and precise in it as other learners and one could not easily identify which product had been created by a learner with DS (see Appendix A, Fig. 23), she enjoyed cutting, working with glue and various materials because it was creative, however, as A. needed a quite often change of activities, she did not manage to continue in one kind of task for a long time. Still, she concentrate well within her ability and was proud of her products.

4.6.3.4 English

There are no English classes concerned in A.’s IEP yet since it should be covered from the third grade, however, it was not known whether it would be beneficial for A. to be educated in any foreign language. As for English, according to the head-master (personal communication, March 15 – 16, 2010) and A.’s mother (personal communication, March 17, 2010), A. would be able to learn basic English vocabulary, e.g. animals, numbers, colours, probably also simple grammatical structures, however, it should be taken into account if such information would be on A.’s behalf or not. It was the question whether the foreign language should be given space at the expense of A.’s mother tongue. It was obvious that due to A.’s intellectual difficulty, she would not be able to learn and understand English without mixing it up with Czech, which would only cause problems.

It would be advisable that the professionals consulted the situation soon because if it was decided that A. would not be taught English, there were changes to be done in her IEP, for instance that A. would have physical training or working activities leading to development of her motor skills instead of English classes with her classmates.

4.6.3.5 Evaluation

It was already mentioned that A. needed persistent motivation, which was interconnected with evaluation. There were several kinds of evaluation for A. because as any learner of her age, she appreciated pictures or stickers, however, what motivated A. most were marks, both good and bad ones. The aim of evaluation was not to underestimate A.’s abilities and give her better marks than she deserved but to be as objective as possible with respect to her intellectual disability.
4.7 A. and interaction with other learners

In general, it could be declared that interaction in the class was a striking element. As for A., she enjoyed the time spent with her classmates for the reason she participated in most of the class activities, she did not stand apart but was actively involved.

After her arrival to school, A. chose a place where to sit, mostly in the first row between a girl and a boy. As the AT (personal communication, March 15, 2010) told me, A. could sit only next to the learners who were not distracted by her behavior since it was sometimes annoying, but also it was important that A. felt safe. A. took pleasure in distributing exercisebooks, which also proved she knew the names of all the other learners. This was an activity A. did regularly because it gave her the feeling of responsibility, which was helpful. When the learners were supposed to make groups and choose its members, the learners always asked A. to join them as one of the first, which pleased her not only for the reason she enjoyed changing her place.

The learners seemed careless about A.’s intellectual disability, at least they did not express any negative attitude towards her. This might be caused by the fact that even if A. was two or three year older than her classmates, she was on similar intellectual level as they were. To support this idea, it is essential to realize that in Telnice school, there were two integrated learners, however, the one using the wheelchair was not accepted as well as A. was, probably because of the same reason as it was mentioned in connection with A. – the learner using the wheelchair was also 10, yet her intellectual level varied and detached her more from her classmates.³

Concerning A.’s participation in games and other activities, she was an adequate member, who only had less complex tasks as other learners, however, when taking into account the intellectual abilities and complexity of the tasks, the learners' ones and that of A. were at the corresponding level to their abilities. It was clear that the learners were delighted to see A. succeed in her task, which was true also the other way round because in the class, there was truly supportive atmosphere. If it happened that A. had some difficulty, the learners did not hesitate to give her a helping hand (see Appendix A, Fig.

³ This could be observed during the learners’ presentation of the books they had read when the learners talked about short and simple stories, however, the learner using the wheelchair presented a book about a pony with much more complicated plot.
It was evident A. had a deep relationship with two of her classmates and when either of those was successful or not in fulfilling their tasks, A. behaved in the same way as they did.

As I had expected some learners to mistreat A. because of her intellectual disability, I was pleased not to see any trace of it. What was more, the learners protected A. when she did something wrong even to them, they did not groan. The only thing they did was to insist on keeping rules, e.g. when A. did not respect the existing sequence in a queue and stood at the first place, however, this was only useful for A. to realize she could not do everything. Although A.’s classmates treated A. well and with respect, there were some learners in the school who insulted her because of DS, still A. did not experience it frequently and the learners from her class recomforted her if it was needed.

### 4.8 Benefits of integration

There were undeniable advantages of having learners with SEN integrated into Telnice primary school for all members experiencing it. As the most significant benefit could be considered the fact that the learners and also teachers were offered the opportunity to interact with people who differ from them but could bring remarkable experience and many innovative ideas.

#### 4.8.1 A.’s benefits

To be the member of the mainstream class was beneficial for A. for the motivational aspects that made her work hard. A. could be inspired by some features one could consider absolutely normal, however, it was an improvement for her education. To learn among a variety of learners was helpful for A. since she could experience many kinds of behavior that she would encounter in her whole life.

As A. wanted to do everything as other learners, it improved her achievements leading to huge progress in her education. This fact could be considered the most important feature of A.’s integration. The AT (personal communication, March 17, 2010) claimed that A. could syllabify only two months later than other classmates, also that A.’s home preparation brought enormous success when A. had to repeat and thus remember more what she had learnt.
It was also important for A. to communicate with other learners, thus improving her speech difficulty because the more she spoke, the more understandable it was since she wanted the learners to speak with her. According to the AT, this attitude was observed at one of the “school in nature” (personal communication, March 16, 2010).

4.8.2 Other learners’ benefits

If one would declare that the learners sharing lessons with the learners with SEN were distracted by their presence, they would not be right. The learners were used to continuous movement in the class and did not even care about it, moreover, they got used to concentrating on their own tasks without letting anyone interrupt them, which could not be considered a general feature of all learners.

The learners were aware of the fact there were others who needed help from time to time and they were willing to offer it without hesitating. They also were not surprised to meet up with someone looking or behaving in different way than they were accustomed to, they were more tolerant. According to the AT (personal communication, March 15, 2010), the learners from Telnice primary school were not surprised or even shocked to see someone using a wheelchair or with DS, for instance in a theatre, contrary to the learners from other schools, where they probably did not have any integrated learner.

4.8.3 Teachers’ benefits

One could argue that having integrated learners with SEN in class may cause only troubles and more endeavour for teachers. In fact, the integrated learners just made the teacher and AT to be alert, which they were all the time regardless of the presence of the learners with SEN. The teachers were offered the opportunity to observe how their class changed under the influence of the integrated learners – the learners became more open and tolerant, which surely was satisfying for the teachers.

4.9 Comparison of theory and the particular integration

As it was described in the previous chapters, there are theoretical ideas forming a basics of integration and people realizing it should keep the rules to create successful integrative policy or to bring their own methods to even better the theoretical background. It is clear that there are always at least some theoretical traces when putting
integration into practice to inspire the participants of the process, however, individual cases require specific changes to be done to suit best the learner, which was applied also in A.’s integration. Some of the differences and similarities of the theory and integration in use were already described but this sub-chapter should give a summary of the comparison.

First, I observed that A. was provided the same possibilities in education as well as her classmates, which had already been claimed to be the vital point of inclusion. It is clear that A.’s possibilities were not that numerous as those of her classmates, yet convenient for her to be able to benefit from them. In other words, A. had appropriate education as well as her classmates, i.e. according to their varied intellectuals levels. Concerning the access to education, the theoretical plan was kept.

Second, A’s parents had the chance to decide whether they inclined to the option of having A. integrated or educated in a special school. With reference to the multi-track system, it was an advantage for the parents that they could choose between the ways of treating the learners since it made them think about all the drawbacks and benefits of each kind of education of learners with SEN. The theory suggests there are the different possibilities to suit best the particular learner, however, this is not implicitly used by all countries.

Third, it would be advisable to point out that the ideas of Mitchell’s inclusive education formula (see p. 14) were all present in the process of A.’s integration. Vision was probably the most important impulse for the parents and teachers of A. in connection with support, resources and leadership, because they could get some information about the integration policy and try to put it in use. No one could doubt the placement of A. and her enrolling to the local mainstream school was not a good decision because it was helpful both for A. and her parents when they did not have to commute to the school. In relation to A.’s adapted curriculum, it was created to suit A.’s abilities but one could argue how it was possible for A. to master her first grade without difficulties when she had not been used to school routines and environment much. I am of the opinion that it was constructive to have the preparatory course before the real beginning of A.’s school attendance since she got used to her classmates and the teachers and during her lessons could then concentrate only at learning. The theoretical background also claims that there should be several participants to create an IEP but in
connection with A.’s case, this was not realized, nevertheless, the IEP for A. was well-prepared. *Adapted assessment* was also used in A.’s case so that the teachers could assess A. objectively with respect to her disability as well as to motivate her. The teachers extended the theory by the use of not only positive evaluation highlighting success but also by negative one to express when they were not satisfied with A.’s work or behavior. A. was also given stickers of pictures after a good piece of work, which was successful because A. liked them. As for *adapted teaching*, it is difficult to say if the class teacher adapted her teaching method because of A.’s integration – the teacher was always ready to offer A. a varied task convenient for her but did not treat her in a different way than other learners. The AT could be considered to be the source of adapted teaching, of course, still she helped A. only when she needed to build up her confidence and responsibility, which was the same for all the learners. In relation to *acceptance*, the theory highlighted active participation of the members of the integrative process, which did happen in A.’s integration and both the teachers and learners were involved in the process. I witnessed A. being fully accepted in her class, however, some of the learners of the school did not want to take her as an equal partner. To improve the situation, I would advice the school teachers not to punish the particular learners as someone could suggest to do, but to have a discussion with all the learners together to explain to them once more why A. is not the same as others and that it is not her fault. It is not without effort to create a society open to a variety differences, yet it will hopefully pay off.
Conclusion

The objectives of the thesis were to summarize basic information about the phenomenon of integration and Down syndrome to find out whether integration of the learner with an intellectual disability was possible. In the theoretical part of the thesis, one could acquire knowledge of special education and the practical part was included to provide relevant information about the young learner with DS. The thesis was compiled to compare the theory with the particular integration in use.

Having compared the theory with the integration put in use, there are some ideas that could be generally applied in education. I found out that the learner with DS can be mainstreamed because the intellectual difficulty allows the learner to be educated to some level, moreover, such a kind of education is beneficial not only for the learner with DS but also for other learners. According to research done because of the thesis, A. was integrated into the local school without major problems and her education and upbringing were successful. There were undeniable advantages for A., e.g. she was highly motivated by her classmates and teachers and by the fact that she was a member of a group, which would probably also happen if A. had been enrolled in a special school but the aim of the thesis was to provide information mainly about integration. Nevertheless, the advantages of special schools were not denied in the thesis. A.'s educational plan was adapted to suit her abilities, as theory advices, and despite the fact it was not created with the help of all the members who should participate in it, it was convenient for A.

One could be interested in the way how the presence of the learner with DS influenced other learners of the class. It may be surprising but the effect was positive since the learners accepted A. and helped her. Learning in the same class as the learner with SEN helped the learners to understand the differences between people and made them realize it is not proper to exclude such people.

The comparison of theory and practical integration proved that it is not effortless to have an integrated learner in the class, however, it is still beneficial. If a learner with SEN can be integrated, there should be no obstacles for them made by teachers or learners because the learner with SEN has the same right to education as others. It depends much on teachers if they are able to provide the learner with SEN quality
education with respect to their SEN, however, it is not that difficult and they should not be afraid of it since there are many professionals and materials to offer information and valuable advice concerning integration.

To sum up, it depends on a society as such if people are willing or able to accept learners with SEN, yet they should try to include them in a “normal life“, which means also education and schools. One should always be aware of the fact that learners with SEN deserve equal rights in education as others and treatment corresponding with their SEN for them to be able to achieve their best. Schools should help the people to realize it by explaining SEN and by supporting integration.
Abstract

The bachelor thesis deals with the phenomenon of integration and focuses on a learner with Down syndrome. The emphasis is put on the learner’s primary school education and describes what had to be adapted in the mainstream educational system to reach effectiveness. The thesis is divided into a theoretical and practical part. Chapter 1 is devoted to the explanation of special educational needs (SEN), the idea of multi-track system, mainly integration and inclusion, its history and principles. Chapter 2 is concerned with inclusive policy in use and description of its elements. Chapter 3 offers information about Down syndrome and the characteristics. Chapter 4 is the practical part providing a case study about a young learner with SEN and Down syndrome. The aim of the thesis is to elicit not only theoretical but also practical information in order to summarize advantages of being integrated and also list possible educational difficulties and try to find solutions for them.

Keywords: Down syndrome, inclusive education, integration, mainstream school, mainstreaming, mental/intellectual difficulty/impairment, special educational needs (SEN)
List of references


Appendix A

Figure 1.

Figure 2.
Figure 3.

Figure 4.
Figure 5.

Figure 6.
Figure 7.

Figure 8.
Figure 9.

Figure 10.
Figure 11.

Figure 12.
Figure 13.

Figure 14.
Figure 15.

Figure 16.
Figure 17. A.’s test.

Figure 18. The word written by A. is in the rectangle.
Figure 19.

Figure 20.
Figure 21. An exercise focused on counting connected with A.’s favourite activity – playing football.

Figure 22. The left product was made by A.
Figure 23. A. among her classmates.
Appendix B

Individuální vzdělávací plán na školní rok 2009/2010

Jméno žáka:
Datum narození:
Bydliště:
Škola:
Ročník:
Třídni učitelka:

Charakteristika a pedagogická diagnostika dítěte:

Dívka ve věku 9 let s diagnostikou Downova syndromu individuálně integrovaná ve 2. ročníku základní školy. Vzdělávání probíhá na základě individuálního vzdělávacího plánu zpracovaného dle školního vzdělávacího programu Učíme se spolu s přihlédnutím k možnostem a schopnostem dítěte.

Jde o klidné dítě, které se těší do kolektivu, snaží se napodobovat ostatní spolužáky. Nevyvolává konflikty, spolupracuje dobré s dětmi i asistencí, její práce se vypočesnává podélá náladě. Je nutná neustála motivace prostřednictvím nových podnětů. K činnostem, které si obírá, se pravidelně vrací. První ročník absolvovala na dle IVP bez problémů.

Do školy přichází v doprovodu matky, do třídy odchází samostatně. Příprava před vyučováním zvládá samostatně – příprava věcí z aktovky do lavice (pouzdře, desky s učebnicemi, pastelky), aktovku uloží na určené místo.

Při vyučování má snahu pracovat jako ostatní děti, tempo je pomalejší, nevydrží se dlouho soustředit, práce je krátkodobého charakteru, zapojuje se do společených činností a soutěží. Ostatní spolužáci ji při práci povzbuzují, mají radost z jejich úspěchů, snaží se ji pomáhat. Během vyučování podléhá náladovosti, krátkodobě odmítá spolupráci s asistencí i učitelkou a hraje si se stavebnicemi, staví puzzle a další herní aktivity (potřeba odpočinku), posléze se sama zapojí do vyučovacího procesu a pokračuje s ostatními.

Český jazyk – pozna a čte všechna velká i malá tiskací pisma, spojuje písmeňa do slabík a slov, případě slovo k obrázků a napak, umí popsat jednoduchý obrázek, převyprávět článek dle obrázku, dokáže se domluvit se spolužáky i učiteli, při rychlém mluvení je ji špatně rozumět, snaží se opakovat pečlivě slova, zvláště při čtení se snaží o výslovnost, ale je zde vidět i stupeň únavy a potřeby odpočinku. Píše psací písmeňa – a, A, c, č, ě, Ĉ, d, d’, e, ě, E, j, J, k, l, m, n, N, o, O, p, r, r, s, š, t, t’, T, u, U, v, v, v, z, ž samohlásky, tvarově jednoduché souhlásky. Přepíše dané slovo psacím písmem a opačně velkými tiskacími pismeny. Při diktátu slov zvládá řádně písmeňa, slabíky, slova i věty. Rozreznává krátké a dlouhé samohlásky. Ví, že na začátku věty stojí velké písmeňa a na konci je tečka. Rozumí čtenému i psanému textu. Sama po sobě přečte.

Prvouka a výchovné předměty – velmi ráda stíhá, lepí a dokresluje obrázky, velice ráda má tělesnou výchovu, orientuje se v oblastech prvouky – škola, rodina, příroda, časová orientace – školní den, den volná, vyučování přestávka a činnosti s tím spojené, v HV se plně zapojuje do zpěvu i výuku – naučené písničky si zpívá i doma, pozná délku not – tá-tá-ty-ty

Vzdělávací cíle:

ČESKÝ JAZYK

Čtení a jazyková výchova
- rozvoj a zpětnění zrakového a sluchového vnímání, vyjadřování žáka
- čtení slov a vět, orientace na řádku, stránce
- rozvoj fonematického sluchu
- rozvoj čtenářských dovedností
- čtení zvládnutého psačního písma
- čtení vět s obrázky
- přednes krátkých říkanek
- dramatizace pohádek
- rozvoj souvislého vyjadřování, reprodukce krátkého textu
- diktát písмен a slabík a slov

Psaní
- rozvoj psychomotorických schopností, přípravné cviky a hry
- vytváření hygienických pracovních a estetických návyků
- správné zacházení a držení psacího náčiní
- psaní psačního písma – malá písmena, jednoduchá velká
- hůlkové písma
- opis a přepis písмен, slabík a jednoduchých slov

Literární výchova
- poslech čteného textu
- vzbuzení zájmu o knihu
- dramatizace jednoduchých pohádek a příběhů
- přednes jednoduchých říkadel a básníček

PRVOUKA
- škola – prostředí školy, okolí, cesta do školy, školní potřeby a hračky
- podzim – příroda na podzim, zahrada, pole
- naše zdraví – hygienické návyky, zdraví a čistota
- příroda – les, pole, zahrada, stromy – dělení, rostliny
- rodina – členové rodiny, u nás doma, orientace v okolí
- zima – příroda v zimě, zimní radovánky, Vánoce
- jaro – příroda na jaře, zvěřata a jejich mláďata, Velikonoce, Den matek
- léto – příroda v létě, ovoce, zelenina, les a louka, prázdniny
- práce a odpočinek – dny v týdnu, den a jeho části, volný čas, hodiny

MATHEMATIKA
- počítání předmětů do 10
- tvoření skupin o daném počtu prvků
- porovnávání v množství v oboru do 10
- čtení a psaní čísel do 10
- přiřazení správného čísla ke skulí prvků
- sčítání a odčítání do 10 manipulačními činnostmi
- počítání s názorem, prsty, stavebnice, kostky, kolečka
- 5 rozdělení na 3 a 2
- určení více méně
- jednoduché slovní úlohy
- řádové číslovky - konkrétní situace
- poznávání geometrických tvarů
- orientace v prostoru

HUDEBNÍ VÝCHOVA
- správné držení těla při dýchání
- nácvik správného dýchání
- rozlišení zvuků
- rytmizace říkadl, rytmická cvičení
- zpěv jednoduchých písní
- hra na tělo, jednoduché dětské nástroje
- pohybové hry s říkadly,
- pohyb podle rytmického doprovodu
- poslech jednoduchých skladeb a písní

VÝTVARNÁ VÝCHOVA
- kresba - práce s měkkými materiály, vyjádření prožitku kresbou
- malba – základní dovednosti v práci s barvou, hra s barvou, světlá a tmavá plocha, využití více barev při práci
- rytmické řazení prvků, barevných plotech,
- prostorové vytváření – rozvíjení smyslu pro prostor
- ukázky ilustrací dětských knih, obrazy pro děti

PRACOVNÍ ČINNOSTI
- práce s drobným materiálem - přírodniny, korálky, špejle, nůž, jehla
- práce s modelovací hmotou – různé materiály – plastelina, těsto, hlina
- vytváření základních tvarů – válečky, placíčky, složené tvar
- práce montáži – stavebnice – práce podle předloh i vlastních představ
- práce s papírem a kartonem – střihání, lepení, skládání, vytrhávání
- ošetřování pokojových rostlin
TĚLESNÁ VÝCHOVA
- pořadová cvičení - základní postoje, nástupy
- rythmická gymnastika a tanec - rytmizace říkadlo, rytmizovaná chůze a běh, poskočný krok, cval stranou, přísuny krok
- pohybové hry
- lehká atletika - hod míčkem, běh, skok do dálky z místa, s rozběhem
- akrobacie – převáděj stranou, koloběžka, stoj na lopatkách, kotoul vprů
- cvičení na nářadí – lavička – chůze vprů, vzad, obraty, přeběh
- šplh na tyči – návěs šplhu s případem
- sportovní hry - příhrávky a chytání míče
- turistika - chůze v přírodě, překonávání přírodních překážek, pobyt ve škole v přírodě, orientace v terénu
- plavání

Zdravotní tělesná výchova
- osobní hygiena, cvičební úbor,
- otužování
- tělovýchovné chvílky během vyučování

Výchovné cíle:
- zajistit podmínky pro bezproblémový pobyt ve školním prostředí
- motivovat k práci při vyučování i mimo něj, k domácí práci
- podporovat začlenění do kolektivu spolužáků, vytvořit kamarádské prostředí
- dodržovat a rozvíjet základní hygienické návyky
- rozvíjet zvážnost mezi spolužáky a učitele – pozdravy, vzájemná komunikace
- účast na mimoškolních akcích – chování v dopravním prostředí, divadlo, kiné
- vhodnou a soustavnou motivaci potlačovat náladovost a vyvolávat aktivitu
- rozvíjet samostatnost

Metody a formy práce:
- individuální přístup při výuce
- využívání učebnic a pracovních sešitů pro speciální školy
- připrava pracovních listů s přiměřenými úkoly
- využití názorných pomůcek – obrázky, stavebnice, karty, pepeka, příkladání obrázků k písmeňům, slovům, větám a naopak,
- využití drobného materiálu – kulička, kulíčky, přírodniny, bonbóny k vytváření početních představ
- neustále používat kladnou motivaci pro práci
- časté obrměňování úkolů a pomůcek, sřídání pracovních činností s chvílkami odběrku

Hodnocení žáka:
Hodnocení žáka bude probíhat průběžně na základě splněnéch dílčích úkolů slovně, z důvodu motivačních známek, hvězdičkou, obrázky, razítkem, nálepku. Chyběně splněné úkoly
budou opakovány v obměnách. Na vysvědčení z důvodu motivačních bude hodnocení provedeno známkou, doplněné o slovní hodnocení výsledků vzdělávání.

**Spolupráce s rodiči:**
Rodiče budou průběžně informováni o vzdělávání jejich dcer. Vzhledem k tomu, že případí a vyzvedává denně maminka je kontakt s rodinou zajistěn a konzultace možnou probíhat kdykoli. Rodiče budou s obsahem tohoto plánu seznámeni. Mají možnost se k němu vyjádřit, případně přispět k jeho aktualizaci během roku.

**Spolupráce s SPC:**
Individuální integrace byla doporučena SPC při MŠs, ZŠs a PŠ Brno – Ibsenova l. Škola bude s SPC konzultovat vzdělávací plán, další možné postupy a metody při vzdělávání. Průběžně budeme SPC informovat o průběhu vzdělávání a plnění výchovně vzdělávacích cílů stanovených v tomto IVP.

V Telnici 31.10.2009

Vypracovala: Mgr. Simona Hemalová – třídní učitelka

Mgr. Leona Bimová
ředitelka školy

Rodiče byli s IVP seznámeni a souhlasí s výukou svého dítěte na základě předloženého IVP.

Podpis:.................................