Challenges around Inclusive Classroom according to Supporting Teachers: Ethnographic Report from School Cultures

Małgorzata Rudewicz and Beata Borowska-Beszta*

Faculty of Education Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, POLAND

*borbesz@umk.pl, borbesz@gmail.com

Abstract

The following article is an excerpt from the entire qualitative, ethnographic research report on the challenges existing at work of 9 supporting teachers in inclusive classrooms of 2 public schools in Poland. The research project was carried out as part of the master's thesis of the first author of the article under the supervision of the second author. The main research question analyzed in this article is: what challenges do supporting teachers have while working in the inclusive classrooms? In addition, the data was focused to obtain the answers for three detailed research questions.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic coding and categorization techniques according to Gibbs[1]. The study results identified 8 main categories related to the challenges indicated by 9 supporting teachers working in inclusive classrooms. These are (a) an institutional support, (b) lack of institutional support, (c) educational barriers, (d) dealing with educational barriers, (e) conflicts, (f) difficulties of supporting teachers, (g) difficulties of leading teachers, and (h) space.

Keywords: Social sciences, education, disabilities, special education needs, inclusive classroom, challenges, teachers.

Introduction

Challenges of supporting teachers in the inclusive classrooms are comprehensive issues related to various problems ground within school as an general institution in the national educational system and to the detailed levels of a school as an organizational culture. Speaking of the school culture, the challenges for teachers may relate to the level of cooperation particularly in the inclusive classroom between leading and supporting teachers or outside the classroom in the context of the general school culture. On the inclusive classroom level, there are difficulties in cooperation with parents of able-bodied and disabled children, as well as problems related to didactic and educational work in the classroom.

The following research report takes into account the concept of perceiving school as an organizational culture[2,3] which implies the existence of at least three main layers of school culture: artifacts (physical, behavioral [language, symbols]),

values and hidden assumptions[2]. Czerepaniak-Walczak[3] cites the definition of school culture after Ward and Burke[4]. The author writes "I assume that school culture is all beliefs, views, attitudes and relationships as well as written and unwritten rules that shape every aspect of the school's functioning as an institution, organization and community"(p.1). Moreover this article considers two main assumptions of speaking of the defined disabilities, considering person-concepts, which includes term as "with disabilities" and also identity-concepts which include the term "disabled." Both terms are accepted and justified in social sciences and especially disability studies.

Speaking of the Polish research undertaken under the way of implementation of the inclusive education in Poland after year 1989 and socio-economic and political changes, research analysis indicates complexed challenges experienced by the supporting teachers in the inclusive classrooms. Buchnat[5] researched the support offered to 120 teachers in their professionalization to work with children with mild intellectual disabilities in regular, public schools. One of the general findings from the survey was that "it turns out that 51% of the surveyed group definitely do not support the education of children with mild intellectual disability in public school, 28% of respondents are unlikely to support, but only 2.5% fully supports this model of their education in regular schools"(p.192). The professional preparation of the teachers for teaching of children with mild intellectual disabilitis in regular schools was also poor according to Buchnat[5].

In addition, Buchnat[5] analyzed reports from the other Polish research and foud that authors such as Gajdzica[6], Al-Khamisy[7] and Garlej-Drzewiecka[8] indicated in the research the existence of a low level of preparation of Polish teachers to work with children with special educational needs. Similar conclusion was cited Borowska-Beszta[9] in the review article. Low level of preparation or even lack thereof is confirmed by studies analyzing mistakes made by teachers in working with a student with a disabilities. Buchnat[5] indicates research carried out by Wachowiak[10] and Jachimczak[11] which shows that teachers working with students with disabilities have problems with establishing the adequate requirements for students that would not exceed their capabilities.

In addition, results of cited research show a low competence in recognizing the needs of children with special educational needs and low skills to adapt the curriculum to their capabilities. Moreover, Buchnat[5] indicated that teachers

more often assessed children through the prism of their disorders, which implied improper educational attitudes. Buchnat[5] concludes that these errors confirm the lack of readiness of the teachers to work with students with special educational needs, but also show that their cause may be related to the lack of knowledge and skills, as well as the lack of readiness of teachers to work with a child with a disability.

Bombińska-Domżał[12] indicated on the basis of analyzes of Polish current research on the cooperation of teachers in the conditions of integration, the structure of the classroom. The author mentions, "observable during didactic in the integration classroom, the process of dividing students into" two worlds ". They are the "world" of able-bodied students with a teaching teacher and the "world" of disabled students gathered around a special educator"(p.127).

Review of Literature

Inclusion: The concept of inclusion presented by Zacharuk[13] epmhasizes the "inclusion (inclusion) is more than integration. It rejects the traditional approach to people with disabilities, proposes to recognize the phenomenon of disability as part of humanity's experience and treat it as a central issue in planning services for people"(p.28). The author highlights that the inclusion: "raises issues related to the right of the child to attend mass school in which he should be provided with the support necessary for proper development and where he should be respected and valued for who he is; it is not a solid state like integration. It is a continuous process of changing the school ethos: it concerns building a school community that not only accepts but also values otherness"(p.28).

In turn, Szumski[14] distinguishes four meanings of the concept of inclusion resulting from the analysis of the ways of using it by educators. Inclusion may be used as:

▪ A synonym of integrative education - according to Szumski[14], "the authors of such language practices do not notice the existence of different concepts of non-segregated education or try to mask existing differences. You can interpret these practices as a sign of resistance to change;
▪ Inclusion refers to the quality of non-segregated education of people with disabilities - this concept arose from a critical analysis of the practice of inclusive education in the United States. It was considered sufficient that a student with special educational needs attends a public school and is surrounded by an additional teacher and therefore is in a pedagogically integrating environment"(pp.23-24).

Inclusive Education: Zacharuk[13] perceives inclusive education as: "the process of increasing the participation of all students in school life, including disabled students. It is a process of restructuring education, politics and culture to suit the diversity of students in their places of residence.

Inclusive education recognizes that children are different and that school and the education system need to be changed to meet the individual needs of children. However, inclusion does not mean assimilation or unification of all"(p.87).

Zacharuk[13] emphasizes that inclusive education seeks to support and build the development process of each child. Therefore, all aspects of a child's development (emotional, intellectual, creative, social and physical) should be taken into consideration if children are to achieve their full potential. An important factor in inclusive education is the recognition that children are learning at different rates and that teachers need special skills to support their learning process in a flexible way(p.87). Al-Khamisy and Butabayeva[15] write that "inclusive education is equipped with the potential to promote values, attitudes and beliefs for living in a shared, though diverse world"(p.84).

Zacharuk[13] believes that "inclusive education is implemented in inclusive schools. The fundamental principle of inclusive schools is that all children should study together wherever possible, regardless of their differences and learning difficulties. The task of inclusive schools is to determine the individual needs of students and strive to meet them"(p.91). The author distinguishes four assumptions about the functioning of schools on the road to inclusion:

▪ "Disabled children and children with learning difficulties should attend regular classes and have the right to assistance during such classes;
▪ All children, able-bodied and disabled, will benefit from the inclusion process, which is an important element of high-quality education;
▪ All children have the right to education which will prepare them for life in society;
▪ The type of teaching and learning that is appropriate (good) for the inclusion process is appropriate for all children"(pp.91-92).

Jachimczak[16] shows that "a change in thinking about education as education for all children requires an understanding of the conditions of inclusive education as part of education policy. Only favorable, understanding and resulting from knowledge about the issue, attitudes of education managers are a chance for real implementation of the idea. Supporting teachers and schools in creating conditions in which joint education of students will be a beneficial solution for each student requires understanding of complex process conditions, differentiation of the needs of schools and educational institutions, depending on their current needs. It is an attitude, ability and willingness to interpret the provisions of law in such a way as to facilitate, support and, as a result, encourage every institution to take inclusive action"(pp.42-43).

Benefits and Barriers of Inclusive Education: Zacharuk[13] lists the following benefits of inclusive education:

- "The possibility for the child to remain in the family home during his education;
- The possibility for the child to be in a close peer and local environment;
- Inclusive education can be helpful in overcoming poverty and social exclusion;
- Inclusive education can improve the quality of education for all;
- Inclusive education can help combat discrimination"(pp.120-124).

Cytowska[17] indicates that the biggest barrier in Polish inclusive education is the lack of qualified teachers, which is reflected in the education of students with disabilities. When education refers to students with visual or hearing disabilities and students with intellectual disabilities, teachers may have problems transferring knowledge to students. The author also indicates that teachers lack the ability to establish contact with disabled students (pp.205-206). Cytowska[17] also shows that the barrier of inclusion is related to the lack of specialists at regular school, not only those who support all students, but also those who support disabled students. According to the author, the support of specialists at school is very important because access to them under the National Health Fund is limited and sometimes children with special needs have to wait even several months for a visit (p.206).

Cytowska[17] writes that the difficulty is caused also by the large number of classes in public, regular schools, which means that teaching a student with a disability cannot be effective. Another problem according to the author is related to the teachers who do not devote too much attention and time to the student (p.206).

Cytowska[17] indicates also as crucial that crtitcal attention should also be paid to the curriculum, which is not very flexible and the same core curriculum applies to disabled and non-disabled students. The author mentions also that teachers also have problems with conducting exams and adapting them to students with disabilities. In addition to the aforementioned barriers, the author also points to architectural barriers, which in their opinion limit the educational choices of students with physical disabilities, hearing or visual disabilities (p.206).

Morover, Cytowska[17] notices that barriers can also be observed in the attitudes of parents, who may be overly protective or not interested in children and their school achievements. The last barrier presented by the author is the negative attitude of the Polish society towards students with disabilities, a lack of understanding for these people can cause discrimination against people with disabilities and provoke resistance to inclusive education (pp.206-207).

General Tasks of Supporting Teachers: Gajdzica[18] cites the concepts of Czesław Kosakowski, who believes that an assisting teacher has the following tasks in the classroom:

- "Accompanying all students in the process of upbringing and teaching, irrespective of the state and possibilities of their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development;
- To provide all children with necessary information, examples understandable for them, which enable them to learn about specific phenomena and reactions between objects and these phenomena;
- Showing students the sources of knowledge they are looking for, appropriate to the level of perception and individual needs of pupils;
- Motivating students to collect, select and evaluate acquired experiences and assess them for usefulness;
- Teaching children to make choices from the activities offered to them so that they can get to know themselves and other people with their conditions and needs;
- Making children aware of the need to improve themselves and to be responsible for their choices or decisions they make;
- Helping pupils to develop specific ways of thinking and acting through a properly organized education process"(p.57).

Kamyk-Wawryszuk[19] distinguishes three areas of activities of an supporting teacher which are "information area, class cooperation area, cooperation with the environment"(p.109). The author analyzes three areas in turn. According to Kamyk-Wawryszuk[19], the information area includes the following tasks of the supporting teacher:

- "Getting acquainted with the content of decisions, opinions issued by psychological and pedagogical counseling centers, certificates issued by specialist physicians, including psychiatrists, neurologists, ophthalmologists etc. about a disabled student. Based on the collected information, the teacher adjusts the teaching conditions to medical recommendations and clinics;
- Organizing meetings with teachers working in an inclusive classroom to inform about the student's possibilities and limitations resulting from developmental deficits, these meetings are organized at the beginning of September, after the winter semester and at the end of the school year;
- Keeping records of the achievements of the disabled student;
- Participation of the supporting teacher in the recruitment of students for classes"(pp.109-110).

According to this author, in the area of cooperation with the class, the teacher performs the following tasks:

- "Participation of the supporting teacher in educational activities conducted by other (leading) teachers to assist disabled students in their work in class;

- Keeping a diary in which all educational acticvities in classrooms are recorded;
- Providing assistance and care to disabled students at regular school;
- Organizing situations that help students meet and accept their colleagues;
- Choosing working methods and teaching aids adapted to the possibilities and needs of disabled students;
- Conducting sociotherapeutic classes;
- Supporting teachers and also perform the function of a co-educator"(pp.110-111).

According to this author, cooperation with the environment consists in:

- "Establishing contact and constant cooperation with parents of disabled students in order to inform them about current academic results;
- Organizing pedagogical and psychological assistance for disabled students;
- Shaping healthy attitudes in disabled students"(pp.111-112).

In turn, Chrzanowska[20] emphasizes in inclusive teaching values as important, and their development within three basic areas related to attitudes, knowledge and skills. According to the author, the values that should be developed are:

- "Appreciating student diversity - according to which differences between students are an advantage, not an obstacle, when working with a group;
- Supporting all students - which means that one cannot focus on a selected group of students - each student should make progress in learning;
- Cooperation attitude - which boils down to shared responsibility for learning outcomes, readiness to exchange experiences, team solving of potential problems, cooperation between teachers, as well as teachers and parents, as well as with the management in a narrower and broader understanding of activities;
- Individual professional development - which is to indicate the necessary awareness that by choosing the teaching profession, a person takes on the commitment to lifelong learning"(p.26).

Helplessness of Teachers in Regular Schools: Olczak[22] lists general problems that affect the functioning of the school and the teachers themselves. These are:

- "Growing temporariness, volatility, speed of change, which concerns a very dynamic situation, even in the legal sphere, changing regulations, ordinances and in the last year also a total reform that increases the feeling of job insecurity, directions of program changes etc .;
- The need to adapt education to the requirements and expectations of the modern world, which sometimes resembles an uneven race against time;

- Changing the position of education, the school and the teacher himself in 21st century society;
- Lack of or a significant lack of authority in the lives of children and young people;
- The disappearance or weakening of social ties, good relationships are lost and competition, extreme egocentrism and individualization are growing"(p.56).

Interesting research on helplessness of public school teachers towards students who have didactic and educational difficulties was carried out by Bulanda[21]. 50 teachers with several years of experience and teaching experience took part in the study. These teachers were from four primary schools in the Śląskie Voivodeship in Southern Poland. The results show that in the question about the concept of helplessness according to teachers, answers contain category as the lack of authority of the teacher and school in Polish society. This answer most often appeared.

The other sources of the teacher helplessness are related to too many rights of the students according to teachers. The other sorces of helplessness indicate answers as: an element disturbing the teaching process at school, lack of cooperation and consistent activities of the teaching staff, lack of cooperation with parents, lack of legal possibilities, some answered that this is not a problem for them and only less than 6% of respondents did not give answers to this question (p.58).

Another aspect of the author's research was the research question about situations in which teachers encountered helplessness at school. Most respondents said that this was the situation during the lessons and the arrogant behavior of the students. The second position was the lack of support from the house and the third during the breaks in the corridor, at the very end having the same percentage of answers were the lack of remedies, the student under the influence of drugs and no response (pp.59-60).

The third question asked by Bulanda[21] was about what causes helplessness at regular schools for teachers. As many as 25% of respondents considered worse work comfort, 20% anxiety, fear, chaos, 19% worse well-being, 16% limited penalties, 10% do not feel helpless in contact with students and the same number of respondents did not respond (p.60). The next research question asked was about the ways of solving problems at school. The answers were as follows: 26% indicate a conversation with a student, 20% conversation with an educator, pedagogue, management, 15% conversation with parents, 9% problem analysis, 8% conversation with experienced colleagues and 1% entering attention.

When it comes to addressing the subject of difficult situations occurring at school at meetings of the teaching council, 64% of respondents replied that the topics were raised at the council meeting that there was a lot of talk about school accidents, aggression, these conversations are

needed, they use the help of professionals, 36% of respondents are negative and say that these are only conversations without trying to solve problems (pp.60-61).

Another research question asked by Bulanda[21] was about the use of legal remedies in the event of difficult situations. The answer to the question most often mentioned exclusion of a student and reporting a problem to the management, granting supervision of a probation officer, calling a police officer. As for the effects of actions taken to overcome difficult situations, the actions taken to obtain results were reprimand and suspension of the student's rights. The author concludes that a new educational program has been developed at school, but the activities only give a temporary effect. Some students understand their mistake and change their behavior, others do not and for others help is impossible and helplessness of teachers appears (pp.61-62).

Research Design

The research was based on the epistemological program of constructivism. Undertaken project was the qualitative and ethnographic research with the participation of 9 females, supporting teachers about their work challenges in inclusive classroom. The research was carried out in 2017-2919 and lasted a total of 19 months. The places of research were 2 schools offering inclusive education in Toruń poviat, in north-central Poland (deep coding). In this report, we present the answer to main question and selected detailed research questions posed in the full project.

Main research question is:

- What challenges do supporting teachers have while working in the inclusive classrooms?

Detailed research questions are:

- What support does the supporting teacher receive or do not receive from the principal?
- What conflicts do supporting teachers see in their work?
- What barriers and difficulties do supporting teachers perceive in the inclusive classroom?

Method

The research project used the ethnographic research strategy according to Kawecki[23], Angrosino[24], Flick[25,26], Gudkova[27], Jemielniak[28] and Kubinowski[29,30].

Data Collection

Nine informants were selected according to the criterion of being a teacher in inclusive classroom for more that 1 year. Data collection included 9 individual, structured narratives, FTF interviews[25]. The ethics of data collection consisted in signing the formal consent form by the Principals of 2 schools and by 9 informants - females, supporting teachers. The research assumed coding of personal data of the teachers as well as deep coding of the places of the research. The

encoding of personal data consisted in giving each informant a name beginning with the letter "R". Nine females in early and middle adulthood took part in the interviews (aged 29-56). In three cases exact age was not provided by the informants. All supporting teachers gave FTF interviews. The informats had seniority in education for 3-30 years.

- Ramona - 30 years, 6 years of work, speech therapist, sensory integration therapist;
- Roma - middle adulthood, 12 years of work, Polish language teacher;
- Rozalia - 30 years, 6 years of work, conducts revalidation classes
- Roberta - 41 years, 3 years of work, speech therapist, Polish language teacher;
- Regina - 29 years, 4 years of work, early childhood education teacher;
- Rebeka - early adulthood, 5 years of work;
- Radosława - 56 years, 30 years of work, Polish language teacher;
- Renata - middle adulthood, 8 years of work, history and social studies teacher;
- Róża - early adulthood, 4 years of work.

Data Analysis

The data is analyzed by thematic coding and categorization techniques according to Flick[25,26] and Gibbs[1]. The study generated 8 analytical categories: (a) institutional support, (b) lack of institutional support, (c) conflicts, (d) educational barriers, (e) overcoming educational barriers, (f) difficulties of the supporting teacher, (g) difficulties of the leading teacher and (h) space.

Thematic Coding and Categorization
Category: Institutional support
1. What support does the supporting teacher receive from the Principal and management?
Codes: conversation, professional development, understanding, comprehensive help, lack of help offers, materials, development, training.

- Róża: "The management supports me in many ways. In my opinion, the most important thing is, above all, professional development in the form of a training board or postgraduate studies."
- Rebeka:"Great support and understanding." "Conversation, teaching materials."
- Radosława: "Correct, according to the regulations." "Possibility to purchase teaching aids". "Student information, exchange of experiences". "During a conversation".
- Regina: "The support I receive from the Principal of the facility is quite difficult to define. Due to the fact that the facility in which I work is large, I have far more contact with deputy directors. On their part, I can count on comprehensive help, both in matters related to teaching, documentation and not necessarily directly related to work. "When it comes to helping relations

with teachers-colleagues, most of them just don't offer their help to others, especially younger ones. But at the moment when they are asked for this help, it does not always apply to documents."

▪ Renata: "Conversations, counseling". "Training and conference proposals. Observation of the lessons and conversation after observation." "Conversation, sharing experiences, helping to develop tests together." "I can photocopy materials, print on a black and white laser printer."

▪ Robert: "Assistance is provided when needed." "Opportunity to develop". "Friend's assistance, joint projects". "Substantive support, teaching aids".

▪ Rozalia: "Opportunity for development, participation in trainings and conferences during working hours, funding for studies and buying teaching aids." "Friend help, replacements during breaks, making teaching materials available for a student with an autism certificate, together we determine the scope of adaptations."

▪ Roma: "Mental support in the form of training and consultation proposals". "Training proposals, I'll be on my side." "Together, we consult test content or class work, what students can learn and their grades." "Conversation and cooperation".

▪ Ramona: "Support understood as assistance in current and difficult situations". "All help in contacts with parents, support and support of my actions towards the student." "Understanding during the lesson, when the student interferes with conducting the lesson, adapting the material to the student, willingness to help." "In a systematic manner, depending on the needs."

Informants drew attention to the fact that the support they receive from the Principal and management as well as from the other teachers is manifested as: conversations, development proposals such as trainings, courses, and Rozalia mentioned a funding for studies. Regina indicated that she has more frequent contact with deputy directors and that she can count on comprehensive help from them. She also pointed out that teachers cannot count on help and that teachers do not offer their help. An interesting fact is that Renata pointed to the fact that she can use a photocopier of a laser printer.

Most informants said that they received support from teachers and showed in what areas, activities they received it. Hoeever not everyone is supported by more experienced colleagues, what mentioned Regina. Renata, pointing out support from the management, mentions such thing as the observation of classes by the management, thanks to observations they can exchange experience with each other.

Category: Lack of institutional support
2. What support from the principal is lacking for teachers?
Codes: "cutting wings", manipulations, lies, lack of separate room, lack of computer, unlimited ink to color printer, lack of help from psychologist or educator, lack of empathy.

▪ Róża: "Sincere and selfless, without lies and manipulation of the situation, such without cutting wings of new initiatives and ideas."
▪ Rebeka: "There is no shortage."
▪ Radosława: "Sometimes there is a lack of immediate help from a psychologist and educator."
▪ Regina: - none
▪ Renata: "Your own computer with a color printer and unlimited inks."
▪ Roberta: "I don't lack support, but the problem is limited access to the photocopier."
▪ Rozalia: "For some teachers, this means more empathy and prior information on the cards and material required for an autistic student."
▪ Roma: "Backstage. A separate room with full equipment, printer, desk, sofa - to prepare materials for students and sometimes go out with them. "
▪ Ramona: "I do not lack support from the directorate and other teachers."

Only one person, Regina did not answer this question. Rebeka, Renata and Ramona said they lacked support. Other informants indicate the support they need such as: back room, social room, own computer with printer, help of a psychologist and pedagogue as well as selfless and sincere support. To sum up, supporting teachers or, as most teachers say, specialist teachers, they receive enormous support from the management and teachers. There are exceptions, The support that teachers can receive or receive is usually conversation, exchange of experience, opportunities to further improve their qualifications, support they lack is empathy, understanding, honesty, selflessness and hardware support.

Category: Conflicts
3. What conflicts do supporting teachers see in their work?

Codes: making "scapegoats", lack of conflicts, no spectacular progress, no winners, conflicts related to general strike of teachers, conflicts between experienced and non-experienced teachers, lack of understanding the specific of work as supporing teacher, not serious conflicts.

▪ Róża: "I think that in such a large school community, conflict cannot be avoided. I noticed many of them. However, his most primitive character is reorientation, i.e. placing the responsibility for the conflict on a unit called indication of the "scapegoat". How easy it is for people and educators to blame someone who hasn't done anything wrong. "
▪ Rebeka: "I have no conflicts or tensions."
▪ Radosława: "Most often there is a lack of understanding on the part of parents. "In parent-teacher relationship." "Conversation, explaining a problem to a parent and seeking a compromise."
▪ Regina: "Observing the surroundings, I did not see any signs of direct conflicts at director-employee or employee-employee level. As in any institution,

especially as large as ours, there are situations of so-called tensions, but from my observations it appears that they are usually resolved on a regular basis and do not increase in strength. "

- Renata: "No spectacular progress, no winners, Olympians." "In parent-teacher, teacher-student and student-parent relations." "On a regular basis, these are not serious conflicts, only tensions."
- Roberta: "At the moment, the tension associated with the new situation in education." "In teacher-teacher relationship". "Through conversation."
- Rozalia: "The teacher's strike, due to the fact that my school is small, the biggest problem is the lack of space to conduct classes individually." "Most often there are conflicts with teachers who do not know what the work of an assisting teacher is." "I resolve conflicts through ongoing conversations before the conflict escalates."
- Roma: "Not all teachers understand the essence of a specialist teacher's job." "Between an older experienced teacher not used to the second teacher's presence in the classroom." "Through conversation."
- Ramona: "There are no conflicts. Sometimes a parent has a different opinion from the teacher, but the relationships are partner and you have to talk and compromise."

Informants indicate that conflicts occur in their work and these are usually conflicts in the teacher-parent relationships and they are resolved on an ongoing basis. Informants also point to conflicts in the teacher-teacher relationship. Teachers solve their conflicts on an ongoing basis by converstions and compromises.

Category: Educational barriers
4. What educational barriers do teachers perceive in inclusive classroom?
Codes: mentality, intolerance, no barriers, classroom equipment, incompetence, lack of cooperation, lack of work at home;

- Róża: "If the support teacher is by vocation, there are absolutely no barriers for him."
- Rebeka: "Sometimes unadjusted rooms."
- Radosława: "There is no special base in the facility, as classrooms, rooms and others."
- Regina: "Barriers to disabled students, in addition to those related to intolerance, the risk of exclusion - there are fewer and fewer of them in my perspective. In my opinion, a bigger problem for disabled students may be the incompetence of teachers working with him who do not quite know how to deal with a child with disabilities. That is why I believe that the role of the supporting teacher is to support not only the student but also the teachers working with him/her. An obstacle in this undertaking may be the fact that, not all teachers want to use this help and cooperate with a specialist, a supporting teacher. On the other hand, the leading teacher does not always have to be substantively

prepared. If he/she is open to cooperation, this problem will be overcome."
- Renata: "Motivation to make effort less and less".
- Roberta: "Program barriers".
- Rozalia: "In my opinion, the biggest barrier is the thinking and attitudes of others."
- Roma: "No work at home".
- Ramona: "Difficulties in social and emotional relations, cognitive functioning".

Barriers indicated by informants are teacher mentality, room equipment, lack of cooperation, program barriers, reduced motivation to learn students, lack of work at home with parents, difficulties of the student in social relations.

Category: Overcoming educational barriers
5. How informants overcome educational barriers? Three supporting teachers did not answer the question.
Codes: rethinking problems, tailoring requirements, knowledge, motivation, adaptation;

- Róża: "In difficult situations I often think to myself" You are healthy today, everything is fine, but you do not know what will happen tomorrow, maybe you will need help. "It helps me a lot."
- Rebeka: - none
- Radosław: "Expansion of the school - dependence on the commune and educational subsidies".
- Regina: - none
- Renata: - none
- Roberta: "By tailoring requirements."
- Rozalia: "I try to spread knowledge and inform students and teachers about specific disabilities."
- Roma: "Motivate students to work independently."
- Ramona: "Adjusting everything to the individual needs of the student."

Róża manages to help others because she may need help herself some day. Radosława thinks that in order to overcome the barriers she noticed, a large initiative was needed, which would be the expansion of the school. Ramona and Roberta adapt the material to the needs of the student and Rozalia spreads knowledge among teachers and students about various disabilities.

Category: Difficulties of the supporting teacher
6. What are the difficulties of the supporting teacher?
Codes: various disabilities, interaction confitions between teachers, distraction, openness, cooperation with parents, attitudes of students, other teachers, lack of space, work pace;

- Róża: none
- Rebeka: "Work with different cases."
- Radosława: "That he cannot talk louder with the student during the lesson, because he would distract others, that he cannot interrupt the lesson for an additional explanation of the discussed content."
- Regina: - none

- Renata: "For both an supporting and a leading teacher, it's difficult to interact with each other, not comment, be open to each other and listen to each other."
- Roberta: none
- Rozalia: "It is difficult to cooperate with the parent and the attitudes of students and teachers. You have to work on it all the time. In the case of my school, the problem is also the lack of space to conduct classes. "
- Roma: "The pace of work in some lessons and level - physics, chemistry, biology".
- Ramona: none

Four informants did not indicate any difficulties and the other five replied. The answers include difficulties such as: various disabilities, the inability to talk louder during lessons, interaction factors, openness to each other, cooperation with parents, attitudes of students and teachers, lack of space to conduct individual classes and the pace of work.

Category: Difficulties of the leading teacher
7. What are the difficulties of the leading teacher?
Codes: understanding of student's behavior, acceptance, respect, authority, presence of supporing teacher, power.

- Róża: "If he/she understands the essence of the disabled student's behavior and treats that student with respect, then the teacher will become his authority. However, if he does not accept disabled students and has such a right, he should not decide to assign the class in which the student with the decision is assigned. "
- Rebeka: "The presence of an supporting teacher. The leading teacher must get used to such presence."
- Radosława: "This is what I gave when discussing the difficulties of a supporting teacher."
- Regina: - none
- Renata: - none
- Roberta: "Sharing activities".
- Rozalia: "For the leading teacher, the very presence of the second teacher during the lesson seems to me so difficult. Some people think that I'm taking their powers away from them. "
- Roma: "Getting used to the louder presence of a second teacher."
- Ramona: "It's hard for me to say this, maybe the very presence of this supporting teacher in the classroom and the fact that he deals with one student and can disturb others."

Regarding the difficulties that the leading teacher has in working with a supporting teacher, informants pointed out that the mere presence of a second teacher can be a problem. They can treat him/her like an intruder who in some sens disturbs them while conducting classes and deprives them of the competence of leading teachers. They also point out that it can also be difficult to share responsibilities. The issue of the power in the classroom was also indicated as the, difficulty.

Category: Space
8. What space does the supporting teacher occupy?
Codes: front of the classroom, walk, same bench, next bench, standing, be at least visible, back of the classroom;

- Róża: "A student takes a place in the first bench, while I sit in a different bench or walk around the class."
- Rebeka: "He takes care of the disabled." "Next to the disabled student".
- Radosław: "In class I sit at the bench with a student."
- Regina: "I always stay close to the student during classes."
- Renata: "Activates a disabled student, includes him in the group." "Somewhere in the back and approaches the student when he needs help."
- Robert: "With a disabled student". "In front of the class."
- Rozalia: "As a supporingt teacher, I usually stand either next to the student or in the back of the classroom. I try to be the least visible, I try to talk to the student very quietly so as not to disturb other students. "
- Roma: "It is close to disabled students. "I sit in a bench with a disabled student or in front of him. Mostly in front of the class from the edge. "
- Ramona: "The supporting teacher is primarily for a student with special educational needs." "With the student."

The asnwers show that supporting teacher usually takes the place next to the student with special educational needs. The teacher sits with him/her on the bench or in front of him/her at the front or at the end of the classroom. The supporting teacher can also walk around the class and when a student needs her, she approaches him. Supporting teacher tries to be very non-intrusive, non visible and calm. The situation of working in an inclusive classroom that requires from the supporting teacher being almost invisible and quiet, is in our opinion extremely difficult and can probably provoke difficulties as mentioned by 4 informants: Rebeka, Rozalia, Roma and Ramona indicating that the mere presence of a supporting teacher can be difficult for the lead teacher. Rozalia indicated additionally the issues of the power in the classroom which seems to be the dilema for the leading teacher as well.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of the research report was to explore the challenges that have Polish supporting teachers in their work in 2 regular schools with inclusive classrooms. Based on the research carried out with 9 informants, we conclude that 9 Polish supporting teachers perceive as present in their work following phenomena, which are related to: challenges, conflicts, difficulties and barriers. They also indicated solutions to them. Although the principals and management were indicated as generally providing the proper conditions for institutional support in the organizational cultures of 2 schools, the informants also pointed out difficulties on the side of the education system in Poland. They mentioned teacher strikes, information manipulations on school levels or even "cutting the wings" for teachers' new initiatives.

The existing and provided institutional support for supporting teachers can be referred to the categories described by Gajdzica[18]. These are: mental support which is shown through conversations and educational support shown through courses, trainings, conferences and even in one case study program funding.

As for other existing conflicts and their sources at work in school culture, in the perspective of supporting teachers, informants mainly pointed to conflicts resolved on current and existing lines as: teachers - parents of children with special educational needs or tension with the other teachers in general. The informants also pointed to conflicts with parents in relation to existing problems of helplessness of supporting teachers who do not always have an impact on the student's work at home and on the student's support by parents at home. The inclusion classroom was also mentioned by Róża, as a "scapegoat" space in school problems, which can be probably seen unfortunately as as school biases reservoir towards pupils with disabilities.

Informants notice also some difficulties and tensions in cooperation with leading teachers. Rozalia confirmed the existing difficulties and the fact that proper relations and attitudes of other teachers and students towards the supporting teacher should be constantly improved. In addition, Rozalia and Ramona pointed out an interesting voltage-generating issue of the mere presence of a second teacher during the lesson in the school classroom, which generates difficulties in cooperation between the leading and supporting teachers. In Rozalia's interpretation, this means for some leading teachers "taking away their competences" by an supporting teacher. The issue indicated by the informant clearly indicates in the background of the challenges of supportive teachers in the inclusive classroom, the issue of negotiating power, as an difficult element of building the cooperation process.

As for the presence of a child with disabilities and a supporting teacher in the classroom space, informants pointed to the periphery of the classroom, on the front or back of the classroom. The supporting teacher usually sits close to the student, sits with him/her on the bench or in front of the bench. Sometimes the teacher walks around the classroom and when necessary, approaches the student. It happens that the supporting teacher must conduct separate lessons with the student in order to explain the material in an understandable way. The position of student and support teacher in the classroom is located on the periphery: either in front or behind the classroom.

One of the interesting challenges of supporting teachers is also the need for continuous training, associated with the emergence of newer methods and forms of work with disabled students, but at the same time such solution is also a way to institutional support provided by school authorities and institutions. Róża and Ramona showed many courses, trainings and conferences they had completed during such a

short period of work as they have. It is interesting that in only 1 case, Rozalia was speaking of an institutional support mentioned that schools cover the costs of participating in studies. It is possible that the conferences, trainings and courses are free of charge for teachers.

However, taking into account general, national strike of Polish teachers in spring of 2019 and their clear demand for better salary, the issue seems to be more complicated. It can be noticed that a financial thread cannot be ruled out which makes further training, courses and conferences a challenge for teachers due to financial costs. The participating teachers indicated knowledge in general as the form of appreciated support form the principals and management staff. There can be seen some paradox. Some facilities in institutional support were pointed out by Rozalia saying about trainings and conferences in which she can participate as part of teachers' working hours and not within her own time after work at school.

However, if the teachers attend conferences and training during the teaching hours, they are not present at the lessons and do not support their students the same time, which is probably institutionally solved; however can be seen as the challenge as well. Moreover, speaking about expenses for teaching supplies, some informants indicated supplies expenses were covered by the school management, some did not.

Conclusion

The results of the research on the part of the full report indicated 8 analytical categories related to the challenges of 9 teachers in 2 regular schools with inclusive classrooms. The categories were defined as: (a) institutional support, (b) lack of institutional support, (c) conflicts, (d) educational barriers, (e) overcoming educational barriers, (f) difficulties of the supporting teacher, (g) difficulties of the leading teacher and (h) space. It should be said that the challenges include also less mentioned challenges and requirements generated by the education system in Poland and education reform as well as the current unfavorable situation of teachers in Poland in 2019 resulting in strikes in Polish schools. Teachers took strikes about low salaries. We want to emphasize that the problems and challenges indicated by the 9 supporting Polish teachers present in the research results overlap the situation of the education system in Poland.

Seeing the limitation of this research, we conclude that it would be recommended to undertake more extensive qualitative research with the participation of a larger research sample among supporting teachers to obtain the more comprehensive knowledge of the challenges in regular schools experienced by supporting teachers. One of most interesting issues is related to the management of the school culture with inclusive classrooms.

In our opinion, in the situation of the 2 schools' functioning,

illustrated in the report as an organizational culture, one may notice a certain paradox which means that overloads of supporing teachers and support of school management are solved by expanding knowledge and completing training and courses by the supporting teachers. That means the same time common source which is generating problem solving and on the other hand problem generating. This form of help from the principal and management is however much appreciated by the teachers, although there is no data, who bears the costs of such a way of solving problems, because only 1 informant clearly indicated the school authorities. 8 others did not indicate sources of financing.

However, we notice as mentioned above, that all courses, trainings may be free of charge, however in the broader cultural context and recent national general strike of Polish teachers in spring of 2019, the issues of the better salary, the teachers demanded, can have some hidden connections and meanings. Therefore, it would be interesting to undertake another research which would focus on the problems related to the assumptions of school cultures with inclusive classrooms, related to hidden factors behind the entire teaching work of supporing teachers.

References

1. Gibbs G., Qualitative Data Analysis, Warszawa PWN **(2011)**

2. Schein E., http://www.untag-smd.ac.id/files/Perpustakaan Digital2/ORGANIZATIONAL%20CULTURE%20Organizational %20Culture%20and%20Leadership,%203rd%20Edition.pdf **(2004)**

3. Czerepaniak-Walczak M., School culture - about its complexity and multidimensionality, *Social Pedagogy*, Vol. XIV, **3(57)**, 77-87 **(2015)**

4. Ward R.E. and Burke M.A., Improving Achievement Low Performing School, Key Results for School Leaders, London Sage Publ. **(2004)**

5. Buchnat M., Teacher competences and expectations to work with a child with special educational needs, Research message, *Educational Studies*, **1(31)**, 177-194 **(2014)**

6. Gajdzica Z., Early school education teacher in a reformed elementary school as an organizer of the process of educating a mentally handicapped child in a light degree, In Special education in the reformed educational system, ed., Palak Z., Publisher UMCS, Lublin, 201-206 **(2001)**

7. Al-Kamisy D., Readiness of pre-school teachers to work with children with special educational needs, In Social integration of people with disabilities, ed., Dryżałowska G. and Żuraw H., Warszawa Publisher, House Żak, 9-17 **(2004)**

8. Garlej-Drzewiecka E., Pedeutological context of thinking about a leading and supporting teacher, In Special education discourses, Rehabilitation, care and special education in the perspective of changes, ed., Kosakowski C.Z., Krause A. and Olsztyn, Publisher House UWM, 174-179 **(2004)**

9. Borowska-Beszta B., A review of lights and shadows of Polish educational integration, *International Research Journal on Quality in Education*, **1(1)**, 23-30 **(2014)**

10. Wachowiak A., Mistakes of mass school teachers in dealing with disabled children, In Disabled student in mass school, ed., Hulek A., Grochmal-Bach B. and Kraków, WSP Publisher, 253-258 **(1992)**

11. Jachimczak B., Readiness of public school teachers to work with students with special educational needs In Place of the Other in contemporary sciences - the challenges of practice, Ed., Chrzanowska I. and Jachimczak B., Łódź Satori Publisher, 189-200 **(2008)**

12. Bombińska-Domżał A., Relations between special and general pedagogy in inclusive education - ambivalence or harmony?, *Disability Education of the Disabled*, **3**, 126-132 **(2010)**

13. Zacharuk T., Introduction to Inclusive Education, Siedlce Academy of Podlasie Publisher **(2008)**

14. Szumski G., Integrative education of the disabled, Warszawa, Publishers APS, PWN **(2009)**

15. Al-Khamisy D. and Butabayeva L., School climate as an educational space for social inclusion /exclusion, In Inclusive education, A wealth of forms and content, Ed., Zacharuk T. and Jówko E., Siedlce, Publisher Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities, 83-104 **(2017)**

16. Jachimczak B., Teacher training for inclusive education, *Educational Studies*, **48**, 33-43 **(2018)**

17. Cytowska B., Review of empirical research on inclusion in education, *Problems of Education, Rehabilitation and Socialization of People with Disabilities*, **22(1)**, 189-213 **(2016)**

18. Gajdzica Z., Situations difficult in the opinion of integration class teachers, Kraków Impuls Publisher **(2011)**

19. Kamyk-Wawryszuk A., Tasks of an supporting teacher in an integration class, In Relations and social experiences of people with disabilities, Ed., Kosakowski C.Z., Krause A. and Wójcik M., Educational Publisher, "AKAPIT", Toruń-Olsztyn, 109-113 **(2009)**

20. Chrzanowska I., Inclusive education - a challenge for the competences of special educators, *Educational Studies*, **48**, 23-32 **(2018)**

21. Bulanda D., Helplessness of teachers towards students who have didactic and educational difficulties (through the eyes of a practitioner), In Disabled student and his teacher in school space, Ed., Gajdzica Z., Rottermund J. and Klinik A., Kraków, Impuls Publisher, 55-66 **(2008)**

22. Olczak A., Contemporary teacher - selected problems and challenges of professional functioning, *Lubuski Annual*, **43(1)**, 55-67 **(2017)**

23. Kawecki I., Ethnography and School, Kraków Impuls Publisher **(1996)**

24. Angrosino M., Ethnographic and observational research, Warszawa, PWN Publisher **(2010)**

25. Flick U., Qualitative research design, Warszawa, PWN Publisher **(2010)**

26. Flick U., Quality of qualitative research, Warszawa, PWN Publisher **(2011)**

27. Gudkowa S., Interview in qualitative research, In. Qualitative research. Methods and tools, Ed., Jemielniak D., Warszawa, PWN Publisher, 111-130 **(2012)**

28. Jemielniak D., Qualitative research, Methods and tools, Warszawa, PWN Publisher **(2012)**

29. Kubinowski D., Qualitative pedagogical research, Philosophy, methodology, evaluation, Lublin, UMCS Publisher **(2011)**

30. Kubinowski D., The essence of qualitative pedagogical research – introduction, *Qualitative Pedagogical Research*, **1(1)**, 5-14 **(2016)**.