

“Every teacher knows exactly
what to do”

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Structure

I. Disability in Polish Education

II. Data

III. Summary & Concluding Remarks



Inclusive Education

- *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*: “commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education system” (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii).
- *UN-Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities* (UN-CRPD): “high quality, free primary and secondary education for all children” (24.2b)

UN-CRPD

- Published by the UN in 2006
- Ratified by the EU in 2010
- Ratified by Poland in 2012

- Monitoring reports by the European Commission



Disability and Education in Poland

- Mainstream education
- Integrated classes within mainstream education
- Integration schools
- Special facilities outside of regular schooling



EU monitoring report 2013

- “overall Polish legislation meets the requirements of the CRPD” (2013, 38)

But:

- “individual principals put pressure on parents of children with disabilities to place their child in a special school” (2013, 30)
- “institutional prejudices hinder sufficient implementation” (



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Challenge

➤ Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education in Poland, Tadeusz Slawecki:

“a need to overcome teachers’ fears and concerns about dealing with pupils with disabilities, which neither perfect law nor any amount of money can achieve”. (2014)

What's happening in the field?

Focus

- How do teachers construct meaning around the tools of dealing with disability?
- From the perspective of Disability Studies, I want to comment on the knowledge that these tools create and encourage reflection on teacher education.

Ethnographic data

- participant observation, interviews
- Grade 5 of a primary school in a large Polish city
- 2-3 days a week from Sept.-Dec. 2016

Tools & Teacher Knowledge

- IPET (Individual Educational and Therapeutic Program)
- Individual Classes
- Isolation

- “Wojtek has been a bad child from first grade on.”
- “If he wasn’t in the group, there wouldn’t be any problem.”

Conclusion

Current tools reinforce teacher knowledge on disability in education that is strongly in line with the medical model of disability.

Reading disability as a social construct may open doors for pedagogical alternatives to the medical and psychological grip on inclusive education.

→ Teacher Education as a way to theorize disability in pedagogical terms and inspire practice.