

UDC 37.015.31:792+316.612]376-056.36

doi: 10.15330/jpnu.11.1.72-85

THEATRICAL EDUCATION VERSUS SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (BASED ON THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE COMPLEX OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN CZERWIONKA-LESZCZYNY, POLSKA)

OLIMPIA GOGOLIN, EUGENIUSZ SZYMIK

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the importance of theatre education in the social development of younger pupils of special schools. The theoretical part presents the theatre education of students with special educational needs, outlines the portrait of students with intellectual disabilities and defines the specifics of the activities of the Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny. The practical part of the article presents theatre education in the Complex of these schools based on interviews with the leaders of the drama club and group "Zetki", on the school's journal and the results of the survey conducted amongst the members of the group. The article proves that theatrical activity promotes integration through the development of interpersonal skills and verbal and non-verbal communication, improvement of visual-hearing-motor coordination, as well as the formation of a sense of empathy and imagination of persons with disabilities. The importance of a friendly atmosphere and mutual acceptance of all participants during theatre activities is emphasised. The authors use the method of theoretical analysis of scientific sources on the research topic; the method of survey, as well as the analysis of the results of empirical research.

Keywords: theatrical education, people with intellectual disabilities, Weronika Sherborne Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny, social development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Disability has grown into one of the most serious issues in the contemporary world due to the fact that it has become a widespread phenomenon, resonating broadly both in individual and societal dimensions. In this perspective, the education of individuals with disabilities becomes particularly significant, especially the kind that properly prepares individuals for independent living and functioning in society (Budnyk, Sydoriv, Serman, et al., 2022). "The search for an optimal model of educating children with intellectual disabilities has resulted in systemic changes in Polish legislation, allowing for maximum co-participation of the disabled in the education process on an equal footing with their able-bodied peers" (Szkoda, 2015, p. 140). "The feature of special education system is a specificity that (...) includes specialised teacher competencies and specialised working methods, the subject of interactions being students with special educational needs (with disabilities, behaviour disorders, and outstanding abilities), as well as specialised methods of their learning, modified content of general education, and a unique learning environment (specialised didactic aids, specially adapted infrastructure, and additional support)" (Gajdzica, 2020, p. 76).

With the intention of adapting individuals to live in society, the authors of this article aimed to present activities related to theatrical education in terms of their potential value in the aspect of

development of people with moderate intellectual disabilities, including the social development of young students in special schools. By social development, the authors understand changes occurring in a person that contribute to conscious participation in social life and activities. The focus of interest was the Weronika Sherborne Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny. The choice of this institution is not arbitrary – the school often achieves success in theatrical reviews at various levels: district, provincial, and national ones. The authors carried out an analysis of the school's theatrical activities based on interviews conducted with the leaders of the drama group “Zetki” (“The Izzards”) and the school's journal.

2. PORTRAIT OF A STUDENT WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Literature on the subject contains several classifications of individuals with special educational needs. One of them distinguishes 9 categories of such students. These include individuals with sensory impairments, motor impairments, intellectual disabilities (this group is the subject of interest of the authors of this article), communication language disorders, combined disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, autism, specific learning difficulties, and chronic somatic diseases (cf. Dryżałowska, 2004, pp. 646–649).

The term “disabled person” appears in the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, adopted by the United Nations on 9 December 1975. According to this document, *“a disabled person means any person unable to ensure by himself or herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of a normal individual and/or social life, as a result of deficiency, either congenital or not, in his or her physical or mental capabilities”* (Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons). Thus, one can acknowledge, according to Andrew Michael Colman, author of the Dictionary of Psychology, that intellectual disability (which the researcher refers to as “mental retardation”) is *“a mental disorder marked by arrested or incomplete mental development (...), leading to functioning at a significantly below-average level (...), which is accompanied by deficits in adaptive functions in areas such as interpersonal communication, self-care, daily living skills, social skills, use of community resources, self-direction, academic achievement, work, leisure, health, or safety”* (Colman, 2009, p. 816). This is influenced by impoverished vocabulary, difficulties in communicating with the environment caused by abnormalities in speech development, difficulties in predicting the consequences of actions undertaken, which translates into a disturbed ability to solve social problems (cf. Wyczesany, 2012, p. 72). Added to this are problems related to the set of “conceptual skills and abilities – language, reading, writing, understanding and using the concept of time and value in daily living activities” (Kijak, Podgórska-Jachnik, Stec, 2020, p. 115).

People affected by intellectual disability make up the school community in specially designated institutions. One of them is the Weronika Sherborne Special School Complex in Czerwionka-Leszczyny. This Complex admits people with mild disabilities, meaning those for whom *“disability significantly reduces the ability to work compared to the ability shown by a person with full mental and physical ability or similar professional qualifications, or who have limitations in fulfilling social roles that can be compensated for with orthopaedic items, aids or technical means”* (Apanel, 2016, p. 141); people with moderate disabilities, meaning those whose bodily efficiency is impaired, causing them to be able to fulfil social roles only with the support of others, although they may undertake employment provided that the position is adapted to the needs and possibilities of the individual, and may also have a limited understanding and use of speech (cf. Bobińska, Gałęcki, 2012, p. 33); people with severe disabilities, meaning those who are unable to function independently and are incapable “of satisfying basic life needs in terms of self-care, mobility, and communication” (Ibid.); people with profound disabilities, meaning those who cannot function independently, “their movements lack precision and purpose” (Marcinkowska, 2017, p. 85), and their communication with the world usually takes a non-verbal form, with emotions expressed through screams or squeals, as well as children and adolescents with autism, including Asperger's syndrome.

3. THEATRICAL EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Theatrical education confirms that theatre is a special kind of performing art, and “being an artist is not (...) reserved only for an able-bodied creator” (Stefańska, 2004, p. 272). While working on a performance, a child has the chance to take on the role of an actor, director, or choreographer. This develops their imagination and creative attitude, shapes their ability to use the body as a device for conveying certain content, thereby improving auditory-visual-motor coordination. Along the way, they enrich their vocabulary, practice memory, and thinking. All of this can contribute to the correction of disturbed developmental functions. Moreover, involvement in theatrical activities contributes to boosting self-esteem, with on-stage successes playing a significant role in this regard. Hence, it can be affirmed that theatre education impacts a child's holistic development, all within the framework of play, grounded in spontaneity. Additionally, it teaches them responsibility, even through regular participation in classes.

During theatrical activities, the student has the opportunity to build social bonds – both with the instructor and other participants – and express their feelings. At the same time, they learn to control their emotions. If we add to this the ability to put oneself in someone else's situation and understand it, we can talk about the process of socialising the individual and awakening in them a sense of empathy. Socialisation is one of the fundamental goals of the educational process in the school system, especially in the case of students with special educational needs.

Participation in theatrical activities can positively affect every child, regardless of the problems they struggle with on a daily basis. *“For hyperactive children, participation in a joint, attractive activity has a disciplining, calming effect. It directs their activity towards a specific goal. Students who do not believe in their strength, are shy and get lower grades in their normal lives, have here a field to show off and are able to present their initiative: if they cannot recite or sing nicely, they can create elements of scenery, they can play mute, motionless roles on stage, and thus gain the respect and sympathy of their peers”* (Wieloch, 2005, p. 295). Therefore, it can be said that theatrical activities have a place for everyone; all that is needed is a good teacher who will be understanding and who will know how to conduct the classes and bring out the best in everyone. This requires trust, sympathy, and a friendly atmosphere. *“By creating opportunities for satisfying, creative, selfless activity, the individual experience of oneself and the world is broadened for people with disabilities, and the desire to be needed, capable of acting, is awakened in them. Finding in oneself untapped reserves of spontaneity, creative energy, and strength (...) can develop a sense of having the resources needed to direct one's own life according to independently set goals”* (Stefańska, 2004, pp. 273–274).

4. SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE ACTIVITIES AT THE COMPLEX OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN CZERWIONKA-LESZCZYNY

The Weronika Sherborne Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny covers the area of the Rybnik County: the Municipality and City of Czerwionka-Leszczyny, as well as the following communes: Lyski, Gaszowice, Jejkowice, and Świerklany. The Complex includes: a primary school, rehabilitation and educational teams, a school preparing for work, and an early childhood development support department.

The teaching staff in the institution takes care of, raises and educates children and adolescents with mild, moderate, significant, and profound intellectual disabilities, as well as children and adolescents with autism, including Asperger's syndrome. Parents or legal guardians can apply for admission to the primary school after presenting in writing a decision on the need for special education. This applies to individuals with mild, moderate, significant intellectual disabilities, autism, and Asperger's syndrome. Parents or legal guardians of children with profound intellectual disabilities may (also in writing) apply for admission to the Rehabilitation and Educational Team.

One of the advantages of the Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny is that it records

a wide age range of students: starting from early development support (i.e., the stage of detecting a developmental defect in a child) to the school preparing for work – students graduate from the school at the age of 24.

The aim of the educational and upbringing process in this School Complex is to educate the students in such a way that will prepare them not only for further learning but also for life in full integration with society. This gives the students a chance to function independently in society and fulfil social roles responsibly. The Complex of Special Schools thus ensures the students' comprehensive development (intellectual, moral, emotional, and physical one) with respect for the needs and abilities of the students.

Specifically, the work of the institution includes the organisation of early child development support classes as an educational and rehabilitation form. This support provides multidisciplinary assistance to children with various disabilities from age 0 to the beginning of education in the first grade of a six-year primary school. These classes favour stimulating the development of the youngest children, as Aneta Wojciechowska claims, "early child development support is an educational activity aimed at stimulating the psychomotor and social development of the child from the moment of disability detection" (Wojciechowska, 2012, p. 29).

The educational stage in the Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny can be extended by one year. To make this happen, a resolution of the Pedagogical Council and the consent of the student's parents (legal guardians) are required.

5. THEATRICAL EDUCATION AT THE COMPLEX OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN CZERWIONKA-LESZCZYNY

Since the inception of the school, the teaching staff has emphasised theatrical education for their students. In the first years of the institution's operation, a theatrical group called "Dziewiątka" ("Number Nine") was active. In 2008, a new group called "Zetki" ("The Izzards") was formed. For three years, two groups operated in parallel, but currently, only the theatrical group "Zetki" exists. The number of people participating in the workshops varies, changing every year. Any student who shows an interest can join the theatre group. The age range of participants taking part in activities is vast, ranging from 11 to 24 years. The group functions with a different composition every year, so there is no permanent theatrical group. When education at the Complex of Special Schools ends, the student also concludes their activities in "Zetki." The continuous rotation of group members makes participants constantly interact with new people, contributing to openness to new acquaintances and relationships. At the same time, working in the theatrical group helps establish close relationships and friendships, which do not end with education but last for many years. The integration of the "Zetki" group is fostered by joint, regular trips to the cinema or theatre.

Children with various levels of disability can join the theatrical group. Wanting to give equal opportunities to every student, the group's instructors do not require participants to have recitation skills. The group includes children who cannot speak or utter only single words, hence the idea of creating a theatre of movement. Due to the specific nature of the work and the diversity of problems that the students face, the group members do not work on ready-made texts or scripts. The teachers develop them, relying mainly on improvisation. The exceptions are nativity plays and the Mystery of the Passion of the Lord.

By joining the "Zetki", a student becomes part of a formal group, where they have the opportunity to shape and develop communication and interpersonal skills, on which their contacts with the environment depend. One of the tasks of the theatrical group is the integration of the team and strengthening the sense of community among the participants in the activities. Being a member of the theatrical group also means the opportunity to perform in front of a broad audience. The performance itself requires confronting internal barriers, related to shyness or feelings of shame. Overcoming these barriers translates into a more open attitude towards the world and the environment in which the

group's students live. These changes are noticed by the teachers, who emphasised this in a conversation with the authors of the article.

The participants of the theatrical activities at the Complex of Special Schools have the opportunity to perform in front of a wide audience. Initially, the group presented performances within the framework of "Bliskie Spotkania Teatralne" ("Close Theatrical Encounters"). Today, they regularly participate in municipal and county picnics, as well as in theatrical reviews at various levels: county, regional, and nationwide. They achieve successes in this field, and a few of them must be mentioned. In 2016, the "Zetki" won first place at the Cracow Artistic Meetings "Gaudium", thereby defeating 27 theatrical teams from Poland and abroad. The performance "Musical Journey Through Life" gained recognition at that time.

The latest significant success of the theatrical group "Zetki" was taking first place in the 24th Theatrical and Recitational Review "Bliskie spotkania" ("Close Encounters") in Cracow. This success was even greater, as it was achieved during the pandemic, and the winning performance was created during online lessons. The title of the performance was "Team Zetki for Better or Worse".

6. ANALYSIS OF THE AUTHORS' OWN RESEARCH RESULTS

The survey research was conducted among the members of the theatre group "Zetki". 12 students responded to the survey, including 4 girls (33.3%) and 8 boys (66.7%). The age of the respondents ranged from 11 to 22 years old. The survey questionnaire consisted of a metric (gender and age details) and five questions, including 1 open-ended question and 4 closed-ended questions.

Analysing such small datasets, contrary to appearances, is not easy. It is not possible to apply statistical methods (standard deviations, regression and correlation coefficients, significance tests, etc.), which require larger sets, amounting to at least 30 or even 100 elements. Even the simplest parameters (arithmetic mean or percentage shares) pose problems in interpretation in this case.

Below, an unconventional method for analysing the survey results involving few respondents is proposed. This method is more qualitative (descriptive) than quantitative. It makes use of a tabular presentation of the obtained answers. The main aim here is to capture the dominant configurations of answers given, depending on gender, and separately in age groups of respondents, as well as in aggregated cross-sections – age groups of girls and age groups of boys.

The analysis is based on tables with data (Table 1 – Table 9), which differ in configuration (order) of the respondents. All tables have the same number of columns (10), containing the following information:

Identifier: student number (No.)

1. Gender: F-female, M-male
2. Age: from 11 to 22 years old
3. Answers to 4 closed-ended questions (Y=YES, N=NO), with the order of questions not matching their order in the survey form. In the tables, the data are arranged in the following order: Q 2, Q 3, Q 5, and Q 4. This order helps to organise data with identical answers more effectively.

4. The next column contains the identifier for answers to closed-ended questions (Data). The symbols 4Y, 3Y, 2Y, 1Y indicate respondents who answered YES to 4, 3, 2, or only 1 closed-ended question.

5. The penultimate column contains identifiers for groups of respondents (Group). There are 3 groups: group A consists of girls, group B – younger boys (under 15 years old), group C – older boys (over 17 years old). Among the respondents, there are no older girls – all are under 15 years old.

6. The last column contains age group identifiers. Two groups are distinguished here: younger students up to 15 years old (D) and older students over 17 years old (S).

The closed-ended questions were formulated as follows:

- Q 2.: "Have you made new friends through your involvement in the theatre club?";
- Q 3.: "Does participation in the theatre club make it easier for you to connect with other

people?";

- Q 4: "Do you feel connected to your group?";
- Q 5: "Is it easier for you to find your way in various school and non-school situations?";

The tables illustrate the configurations of answers given in 3 variations:

- respondents ordered by gender, and within gender by age (Tables 1, 2, 3),
- respondents ordered by age, and within age groups by gender (Tables 4, 5, 6),
- respondents ordered by gender, and within gender by answers to Q 4 (Tables 7, 8, 9).

Tables 1, 4 and 7 present configurations of answers for all the students.

In Tables 2, 5 and 8, a student whose answers differed most from all others was omitted. He was the oldest – a twenty-two-year-old (M22) – respondent in the surveyed group. He answered YES to only 1 closed-ended question, while his answers to the other 3 questions were NO.

In Tables 3, 6 and 9, another student whose answers differed from the answers of the other students was omitted. He was a twenty-one-year-old (M21), who answered YES to 2 questions, and NO to the other 2.

Tab. 1

Survey results by gender and age for 12 students

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
259	M	22	N	N	N	Y	1Y	C	S
			Y11 N1	Y10 N2	Y7 N5				

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 2

Survey results by gender and age for 11 students (excluding M22)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
			Y11	Y10 N1	Y6 N5				

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 3

Survey results by gender and age for 10 students (excluding M22 and excluding M21)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
			Y10			Y6 N4			

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 4

Survey results by gender and age for 12 students

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
259	M	22	N	N	N	Y	1Y	C	S
			Y11 N1		Y10 N2	Y7 N5			

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 5

Survey results by gender and age for 11 students (excluding M22)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S

305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
			Y11		Y10 N1	Y6 N5			

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 6

Survey results by gender and age for 10 students (excluding M22 and excluding M21)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
			Y10			Y6 N4			

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 7

Survey results by gender for 12 students

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
259	M	22	N	N	N	Y	1Y	C	S
			Y11 N1		Y10 N2	Y7 N5			

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 8

Survey results by gender for 11 students (excluding M22)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D

207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
305	M	21	Y	Y	N	N	2Y	C	S
			Y11	Y10 N1	Y6 N5				

Source: authors' own compilation

Tab. 9

Survey results by gender for 10 students (excluding M22 and excluding M21)

No.	Gender	Age	Q 2	Q 3	Q 5	Q 4	Data	Groups	Age Range
254	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
154	F	13	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
220	F	14	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
227	F	15	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	A	D
311	M	17	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
240	M	21	Y	Y	Y	Y	4Y	C	S
200	M	11	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
207	M	12	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
232	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
214	M	13	Y	Y	Y	N	3Y	B	D
			Y10	Y6 N4					

Source: authors' own compilation

As a result of these eliminations, a 10-person group was obtained, marked by a very high consistency of answers. Out of 40 possible answers (10 students x 4 questions), only 4 students gave a negative response to the same question 4 (Q 4). In the case of an 11-person group, out of 44 possible answers (11 x 4), the number of negative answers was 6, while in the 12-person group (without eliminating typical respondents) – 9.

Percentages of negative answers can be determined in various analysis variations (Tab. 10). These shares decrease from 18.8% to 10.0%.

Tab. 10

Percentages of negative answers in groups of 12, 11, and 10 people

Number of students	Number of answers	No. of answers NO	% of answers NO
12	48	9	18.8%
11	44	6	13.6%
10	40	4	10.0%

Source: authors' own compilation

It is worth noting that in all 3 answer variations, negative answers (with one exception) refer to the same question (Q 4).

To facilitate the analysis of the tables, the table cells were formatted using black-and-white diagonal stripes. The formatting applied to cells containing the variations of the individual features (columns) with the highest numbers. These are:

- male (M) for gender,
- answers Y (YES) in columns Q 2 – Q 5,
- entry 4Y in the Data column,

- girls (A) in the Group column,
- age under 15 (D) in the Age Range column.

In the Age column, cell formatting was omitted due to the large number of age variations (8)¹.

Furthermore, in the last rows of columns Q 2 – Q 5, the distributions of answers to these questions were noted down, using entries:

Y10 – 10 answers (YES),

Y11 – 11 answers (YES),

Y10 N1 – 10 answers (YES) and 1 answer (NO),

Y6 N5 – 6 answers (YES) and 5 answers (NO) etc.

The results of the analysis allow for the formulation of final conclusions. Above all, it must be recognised that the vast majority of the students gave affirmative answers to 3 out of 4 closed-ended questions (Q 2, Q 3, and Q 5). Only in the case of Q 4 the answers are diverse, with this diversity occurring in the group of boys. The girls (group A) gave affirmative answers to all 4 questions. In the case of boys, 3 people answered YES to question 4, while the remaining 5 answered NO. It should be noted that the young boys (group B) unanimously did not give an affirmative answer to question 4. Differences appeared among the older respondents (group C): one answer was NO, and the remaining 3 were YES.

There can be more conclusions of this type drawn. Below, another method of analysis will be given, producing similar results. In this case, two-dimensional tables are used, in which the numbers of answers provided are juxtaposed from the point of view of two features. There are 10 possible 2-dimensional tables for 5 features. These are tables for the following sets of features:

- [Data] in relation to other features [Gender], [Age], [Age Range], [Groups];
- [Groups] in relation to [Gender], [Age], [Age Range];
- [Gender] in relation to [Age], [Age Range];
- [Age Range] in relation to [Age].

All 10 of the mentioned sets are collected in Table 11 in the following arrangement:

- on the left side, there are combinations of the [Data] feature with the other features,
- in the middle – the [Group] feature and the other 3 features,
- on the right side – the other 3 combinations.

In the tables, cases are marked with a black-and-white pattern, where the numbers greater than 1 from the centre of the tables are equal to the edge numbers (in the last row or last column). Such cases indicate relationships of the features.

Examples of the relationships:

- all girls – answer 4Y,
- answer 3Y – only boys,
- answer 3Y – only younger boys,
- all girls – a group of younger respondents,
a group of older respondents – only boys etc.

¹Cell formatting in tables to facilitate the interpretation of their contents can also utilise colours. In Excel, the conditional formatting function is available for this purpose.

Student numbers across the categories of Data (4Y – 1Y), Groups (A, B, C), Gender (F, M), and Age Range (D, S) against other features

	Data						Groups					Gender			
Gender	4Y	3Y	2Y	1Y	Suma	Gender	A	B	C	Suma	Age	F	M	Suma	
F	4	0	0	0	4	F	4	0	0	4	11	0	1	1	
M	2	4	1	1	8	M	0	4	4	8	12	0	1	1	
Suma	6	4	1	1	12	Suma	4	4	4	12	13	2	2	4	
											14	1	0	1	
	Data						Groups					15	1	0	1
Age	4Y	3Y	2Y	1Y	Total	Age	A	B	C	Total	Age	F	M	Total	
11	0	1	0	0	1	11	0	1	0	1	21	0	2	2	
12	0	1	0	0	1	12	0	1	0	1	22	0	1	1	
13	2	2	0	0	4	13	2	2	0	4	Total	4	8	12	
14	1	0	0	0	1	14	1	0	0	1					
15	1	0	0	0	1	15	1	0	0	1		Gender			
17	1	0	0	0	1	17	0	0	1	1	Age Range	F	M	Total	
21	1	0	1	0	2	21	0	0	2	2	D	4	4	8	
22	0	0	0	1	1	22	0	0	1	1	S	0	4	4	
Total	6	4	1	1	12	Total	4	4	4	12	Total	4	8	12	
	Data						Groups					Age Range			
Age Range	4Y	3Y	2Y	1Y	Total	Age Range	A	B	C	Total	Age	D	S	Total	
D	4	4	0	0	8	D	4	4	0	8	11	1	0	1	
S	2	0	1	1	4	S	0	0	4	4	12	1	0	1	
Total	6	4	1	1	12	Total	4	4	4	12	13	4	0	4	
											14	1	0	1	
	Data						Groups					15	1	0	1
Groups	4Y	3Y	2Y	1Y	Total						17	0	1	1	
A	4	0	0	0	4						21	0	2	2	
B	0	4	0	0	4						22	0	1	1	
C	2	0	1	1	4						Total	8	4	12	
Total	6	4	1	1	12										

Source: authors' own compilation

The above considerations and tables present the results obtained in response to closed-ended questions. For the case of an open-ended question, the respondents were asked about the reasons for participating in the "Zetki" theatre group. The motives were varied (Table 12). Both girls and boys said that they "enjoy acting" and that they were encouraged to join the group by others. The last response that was picked by both genders was the statement "I have theatrical skills."

Provided answers to the open-ended question "Why do you participate in the "Zetki" theatre group activities?"

	Female	Male	Total
I enjoy acting.	2	3	5
I was encouraged by somebody (a friend, a teacher).	1	3	4
I want to become an actor.	0	3	3
I have theatrical skills.	1	1	2
Performing calms me down.	1	0	1
I feel like I'm in a different world.	0	1	1
I forget about problems.	0	1	1
It is fun.	0	1	1
Total	5	13	18

Source: authors' own compilation

The method of analysing small sets of survey data used in this study apparently allows for drawing several conclusions about the relationships between individual variables. This includes both the direction and level of these relationships. This method has been proposed as an alternative solution compared to statistical methods for analysing survey data, which can be applied to sets containing at least 30 surveys.

It is worth considering conducting research aimed at assessing the applicability of the methods used in this study for analysing larger datasets. In this case, there would be an opportunity to evaluate the reliability of the results obtained, as they could be compared to outcomes achieved using standard statistical methods.

7. SUMMARY

Theatrical education, implemented in such a manner, may become "a symbolic door wide open, serving to enhance the quality of life and expand the autonomy of individuals with intellectual disabilities" (Wolny, 2007, p. 183).

Participation in theatrical activities promotes the integration of the group, which was also proven by research conducted by the authors of the article. This integration occurs through the development of interpersonal skills and verbal and non-verbal communication (Fomin, Budnyk, Matsuk, et al., 2020), the improvement of visual-auditory-motor coordination, as well as the shaping of a sense of empathy and imagination. Additionally, it allows students to think and act creatively, unleashing their spontaneity (cf. Bąk-Buczak, 2006, p. 10). This is confirmed by reflections made by Anita Stefańska, from which it follows that "the theatre of the disabled is often a theatre of free expression, where the spontaneous actor struggles with reality and his own disability" (Stefańska, 2004, p. 45). Releasing this spontaneity is only possible under certain conditions. A friendly atmosphere and mutual acceptance of all participants are essential. During theatrical activities, the teacher enables students to explore the world of music and movement. The task is the proper selection of repertoire or the creation of own script, which, being tailored to the members of the theatre group, will bring out what lies dormant in them.

When the "intellectually disabled student performs on the theatrical stage, he/she becomes the co-creator of another, better reality, begins to arouse admiration and respect from the viewer (...). He / She achieves success, which raises the sense of self-worth, allowing educators to successfully carry out rehabilitation activities aimed at the comprehensive development and strengthening of the student's personality" (Wieloch, 2005, p. 293). On the other hand, the way people with disabilities are perceived

by outsiders may change, in which generalisations often occur, and people with disabilities are seen as weaker.

REFERENCES

- [1] Apanel, D. (2016). *Theory and Practice of Integrative Education for People with Disabilities in Poland in the Years 1989-2014*. "Impuls" Publishing House, Cracow. (in Polish)
- [2] Bąk-Buczak, E. (2006). Theatre Workshops with Elements of Psychodrama as a Method of Working with Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities. *Everything for School*, 3, 9–10.
- [3] Bobińska, K., & Gałęcki, P. (2012). Historical Outline, Terminology, Definition, Nosology, Criteria for Recognising Intellectual Disability. In: K. Bobińska, T. Pietras, P. Gałęcki (Eds.), *Intellectual Disability – Etiopathogenesis, Epidemiology, Diagnosis, Therapy*. (pp. 21–40). Continuo Publishing, Wrocław. (in Polish)
- [4] Budnyk, O., Sydoriv, S., Serman, L., Lushchynska, O., Tsehelnik, T., & Matsuk, L. (2022). Inclusive education in rural schools of Ukraine or how to ensure quality inclusive education in rural schools in Ukraine? *Revista Brasileira De Educação Do Campo*, 7, e13940. <https://doi.org/10.20873/uft.rbec.e13940>
- [5] Colman, A. M. (2009). Mental Impairment. In: A.M. Coleman, *Psychology Dictionary*. (p. 816). Scientific Publishing PWN, Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [6] *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons*. Online access: Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons – niepełnosprawni.pl. Access date: 13 November 2021.
- [7] Dryżałowska, G. (2004). Disability. In: T. Pilch (Ed.), *21st Century Pedagogical Encyclopaedia*. Vol. 3. (pp. 646–649). Academic Publishing "Żak", Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [8] Fomin, K., Budnyk, O., Matsuk, L., Mykhalchuk, O., Kuzenko, O., Sirenko, A., & Zakharasevych, N. (2020). Dynamics of Future Teachers' Cognitive Readiness Development to Organize Students' Dialogic Learning. *Revista Inclusiones*, 7, Esp. Octubre/Diciembre/Junio, 276-288.
- [9] Gajdzica, Z. (2020). *Student with Mild Intellectual Disability in a Public School. Teachers on the (Un)changed Situation in the Context of Inclusive School Culture*. Scientific Publishing PWN SA, Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [10] Kijak, R., Podgórska-Jachnik, D., & Stec, K. (2020). *Disability. Challenges. Social Work*. Difin Publishing, Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [11] Marcinkowska, B. (2017). Didactics of Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities. In: J. Głodkowska (Ed.), *Special Didactics. From Systematics to Designing Specialist Didactics*. (pp. 77–95). Scientific Publishing PWN, Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [12] *Charter of the Weronika Sherborne Complex of Special Schools in Czerwionka-Leszczyny*. 2015. http://bip.zss-leszczyny.pl/files/statut_calosc_2015.pdf (in Polish)
- [13] Stefańska, A. (2004). Preserve Dignity, or on the Artistic Theatre of the Mentally Disabled. In: K. Krasoń, B. Mazepa-Domagała (Eds.), *Creative Expression of the Child. Contexts – Inspirations – Areas of Actualisation*. (pp. 271–279). "Librus", Katowice. (in Polish)
- [14] Stefańska, A. (2004). Preserve Dignity, or on Artistic Theatre of the Mentally Disabled. *Common Topics*, 10, 42–48.
- [15] Szkoda, E. (2015). Diagnosing and Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs – Legal Regulations vs School Reality. In: E. Smak, A. Włoch, M. Garbiec (Ed.), *Diagnosing and Therapy of Students with Special Educational Needs*. (pp. 137–148). University of Opole Publishing, Opole. (in Polish)
- [16] Wieloch, A. (2005). The Role of Theater in Rehabilitation of a Mildly Intellectually Disabled Child. In: K. Krasoń, B. Mazepa-Domagała. (Ed.), *Dimensions of Child Expression. Stimulation – Self-Actualisation – Support*. (pp. 290–296). "Librus", Katowice. (in Polish)
- [17] Wojciechowska, A. (2012). Early Intervention and Development Support for the Child. In: M. Buchnat, B. Tylewska-Nowak (Eds.), *Children and Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities in the Education System*. (pp. 26–40). Difin, Warsaw. (in Polish)
- [18] Wolny, J. (2007). Meeting with Theatre in the Context of the Quality of Life of Mentally Disabled Persons, Based on Experiences from the Implementation of EU Projects and Local Initiatives. In: M. Flaczewska-Wolny M. (Ed.), *Quality of Life in Disability. Myths vs Reality*. (pp. 177–184). Impuls Publishing House, Kraków. (in Polish)
- [19] Wyczesany, J. (2012). Selected Aspects of Diagnosis and Therapy of People with Intellectual Disabilities. In: K. Bobińska, T. Pietras, P. Gałęcki (Eds.), *Intellectual Disability – Etiopathogenesis, Epidemiology, Diagnosis, Therapy*. (pp. 69–92) Continuo Publishing, Wrocław. (in Polish)

Olimpia Gogolin, Doctor of Humanities, Municipal Public Library in Gliwice, Poland;

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0969-5123

Eugeniusz Szymik, Doctor of Humanities, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland;

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9684-3253

Address: Olimpia Gogolin, Eugeniusz Szymik, ul. Kościuszki 17, 44-100 Gliwice; ul. Grażyńskiego 53, 40-126 Katowice.

E-mail: olimpia.gogolin@onet.eu, eugeniusz.szymik@us.edu.pl

Received: January 27, 2024; **revised:** February 15, 2024; **accepted:** February 27, 2024; **published:** March 18, 2024.

Гоголін Олімпія, Шимік Євгеніуш. Театральне виховання та соціальний розвиток учнів з порушеннями інтелектуального розвитку (на прикладі діяльності комплексу спеціальних шкіл у Червйонка-Лещинах, Польща). *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, **11** (1) (2024), 72-85.

Мета статті – показати заняття у сфері театрального виховання з погляду їх потенційної цінності для розвитку людей з помірними порушеннями інтелектуального розвитку, у тому числі й для соціального розвитку учнів спеціальних шкіл. У теоретичній частині автори розглядають театрального виховання учнів з особливими освітніми потребами, окреслюють портрет учня з інтелектуальною недостатністю, представляють специфіку діяльності Комплексу спеціальних шкіл у Червйонка-Лещинах. У практичній частині представлено театрального виховання Комплексу спеціальних шкіл у Червйонка-Лещинах на основі бесіди, проведеної з вихователями театрального гуртка “Zetki”, та хроніки школи, а також результатів опитування, проведеного серед учасників театрального гуртка. У статті доведено, що театралізована діяльність сприяє інтеграції, яка відбувається через розвиток міжособистісних навичок, вербальної і невербальної комунікації, покращення зорово-слухо-моторної координації, а також формування почуття емпатії та уяви осіб з інвалідністю. Наголошено на значенні доброзичливої атмосфери і взаємного прийняття всіх учасників під час театралізованої діяльності. Авторами використано метод теоретичного аналізу наукових джерел з теми дослідження; метод опитування, а також аналіз отриманих результатів емпіричного дослідження.

Ключові слова: театрального виховання, особи з інтелектуальною недостатністю, комплекс соціальних шкіл ім. Вероніки Шерборн у Червйонка-Лещинах, соціальний розвиток.